

## Greater Takapuna Reference Group report to the Local Board

For DT Local Board meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017

### Executive summary:

After 8 months of meeting to consider and discuss the desired future of Takapuna, the Greater Takapuna Reference Group (GTRG) gave a briefing to the Local Board on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016 about their collective thinking. The GTRG agreed on a 'vision' statement and success factors for a desirable Takapuna. The GTRG also identified 7 practical steps that will assist in shaping Takapuna town centre. The GTRG is willing to continue its advisory function in 2017 with particular focus on Panuku's public consultation planned for March 2017 and implementation by Auckland Council of the Hurstmere Road developments.

### Recap on GTRG process:

The GTRG was convened in April 2016 after a decision by the DT Local Board in late 2015 to form a community reference group who would consider issues and advise the Local Board. The aim was to provide a channel for clarifying stakeholder aspirations within the context of the Auckland planning regime.

The GTRG membership is diverse<sup>1</sup> with all members being volunteers and committed to collaborative practice and principles. The GTRG met monthly from April to November (plus a meeting to brief the Local Board in December) and participated in online collaboration between meetings. The GTRG heard from each other and from specialist presentations to then build collective intelligence and agree common ground about the desired future of Takapuna.

The Local Board agreed that the Panuku Unlock project would be the ideal initial project for the GTRG to engage on. Panuku are putting together a Framework Plan to inform the development of the Takapuna Unlock project and the work of the GTRG is intended to influence this. Panuku intend to consult with the wider community in March 2016.

When the GTRG was initiated Panuku agreed to assist with the costs of facilitating the group. Personnel from Panuku participated in all of the GTRG meetings and contributed to the shared learning about the complexity of Takapuna.

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<sup>1</sup> Voices from the following sectors: Events, Youth, Parks, Panuku, Transport, Arts, Education, Sunday market, Local Board, Auckland Council, Residents of High, medium and low density housing, Accessibility, Community, Tangata whenua, Business, Technology and Health.

### **Vision:**

After 3 months of hearing each other's views about Takapuna, the GTRG agreed to specifically consider:

**“How can we as a community influence Takapuna’s development as a great place to work, live and play by enhancing our social, economic, natural and cultural environment and creating open and civic spaces for all ages and abilities to enjoy.”**

### **Success factors:**

Many success factors were identified by the GTRG as important for achieving this desired Takapuna, with the following 13 being considered the ‘must-haves’.

- Open public space
- Public transport with high usability
- Traffic flowing
- Sufficient parking
- Abundant and secure market opportunities
- Housing affordability, access and supply
- Natural environment maintained & enhanced
- Māori perspective embraced
- Retail, hospitality & accommodation vibrant
- Arts and culture welcomed and supported
- Universal Design ensures multi-use spaces and connections with an emphasis on pedestrian and cycle movement
- Events are welcomed and supported
- Employment opportunities (esp. technology) pursued

### **Future narratives:**

A number of the GTRG wrote about their visions of a future Takapuna that had them journeying around a Takapuna that was accessible, attractive and vibrant. The seven narratives<sup>2</sup> were then integrated into a ‘super narrative’ that gives an idea of what Takapuna could be in the future.

### **Initial recommendations:**

The GTRG identified the following recommendations as front-runners for actions that could have a positive catalytic effect on Takapuna. The recommendations are not an exhaustive list and the GTRG appreciate opportunities to further explore actions for Takapuna with regard to the success factors identified above as more information<sup>3</sup> comes to hand.

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<sup>2</sup> The narratives are attached in Appendix One to this report

<sup>3</sup> For example, definitive parking and transport data and developments with Treaty settlements, housing projects and implications for natural environment impacts.

### **1. GASOMETER SITE**

It is recommended that a dedicated carpark be built for long-stay and all-day parkers on the Gasometer site, first and foremost.

The building is to be adaptable with residential and retail options possible in the future.

The GTRG also recognised that there will be disruption to short-stay parking with future development of the Anzac car park and suggested that the Gasometer site might have flexibility to temporarily cater for short-stay parking over the disruption period.

### **2. OPEN PUBLIC SPACE**

In recognition that public spaces are gathering points where city dwellers interact, congregate, celebrate and break down barriers; it is recommended that there be a mix of green and hard spaces that are 'activated' and are of various sizes.

It is recommended that sizeable green spaces are maintained and opportunities to increase green space like the Northern Reserve are explored.

It is recommended that connections and view shafts and connections are opened up between the public spaces, for example from the 'Civic Plaza' (discussed in the next recommendation) across open space to Hurstmere Green and then beyond to the Takapuna Beach reserve, the beach and to Rangitoto across the Channel.

It is recommended that there be exploration of better using the hard space by the current library site.

### **3. ANZAC QUARTER**

It is recommended that a heart be created for Takapuna on the current Anzac car park in the form of a 'Civic Plaza' that could be called the Anzac Quarter.

It is recommended that the TAB and Burger King building be purchased and added to Potter's Park together with additional space to create a civic plaza of approximately 80m square for public use. Creative design will enable activation of the space.

It is recommended that all war memorials be moved into this space.

It is recommended that consideration be given to moving the library into the Anzac Quarter.

It is recommended that a height limit of 6 storeys be encouraged around the Anzac Quarter to maximize sun and limit shade and wind.

It is recommended that the multi-use design in Panuku thinking that includes opportunities for street markets and events be supported.

#### **4. SUNDAY MARKET**

In recognition that the current format of the Sunday market requires hard surfaces and extensive vehicle access that can be found in Smales Farm as well as in the current Anzac car park, it is recommended that there be a medium-term plan to relocate the Sunday market. This plan should:

- Have plenty of lead-in time to a change of venue
- Be initiated at the time of the Anzac Quarter developments
- Have minimal disruption to the Sunday market experience
- Take into account transport links between Smales Farm and Takapuna town centre

#### **5. HURSTMERE ROAD DEVELOPMENTS**

It is recommended that the Hurstmere Road developments be planned, engaged on and implemented at the same time as the Panuku Unlock initiative.

Although the responsible agencies (Panuku, Auckland Council, Auckland Transport, D-T Local Board) have differing budgets, the outcomes of the changes affect all Takapuna residents, workers and visitors. It is therefore crucial that these agencies fully collaborate on development in Takapuna.

#### **6. UNIVERSAL DESIGN**

It is recommended that Takapuna become a flagship destination for Universal Design.

Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without need for adaptation. It is driven by a mindset of an inclusive environment that is good for everyone.

It is recommended that all design decisions in Takapuna to have universal design incorporated from the outset with no more retrofitting!

It is noted that the new playground by the beach is already proving Universal Design value.

#### **7. EVENTS**

It is recommended that all agencies with decision-making authority in Takapuna agree an Event-friendly policy.

Recognising that events bring people and income to Takapuna, it is important that governing bodies support events in principle and work with event organisers to plan and run events smoothly.

It is recommended that the proposed Anzac Quarter in addition to Gould Reserve and Hurstmere Green be used for events.

### **The GTRG in 2017:**

Success of the GTRG's work will largely rest on how much Panuku is influenced by the GTRG's thinking and this will be evident initially in the content and process of Panuku's community consultation.

The D-T Local Board has indicated their appreciation of the GTRG work to date and have indicated they want the GTRG to continue into 2017.

Key issues that require clarity for the GTRG moving forward are:

- Core focus for 2017
- Membership of the GTRG to be fit for the agreed focus
- Facilitation of the GTRG (previously funded by Panuku)
- Public communication of the GTRG's work to date

## APPENDIX ONE: NARRATIVES ABOUT FUTURE TAKAPUNA

### **NARRATIVE ONE:**

Arriving in Takapuna in a driverless Uber after a 5 minute trip from Devonport (no traffic lights or congestion to deal with on the way), I alight at the Halls Corner end of the new pedestrianized section of Hurstmere Road, “Hurstmere on the beach”, that runs to the corner of Anzac Street.

This newly revamped area has shops and café’s/restaurants spilling out with funky places to eat, sit, be entertained and shop. Businesses on the eastern side of the street have opened up to the rear and now views to the beach can be seen from the Hurstmere on the beach area.

The car parks that once sat between the shops and the beach have gone, the Strand is now all pedestrian with boardwalks (with careful attention having been paid to ensuring all areas are wheelchair/mobility scooter accessible) featuring hospitality and family area’s that enjoy amazing views of the best urban beach in Auckland.

Gone also is the Anzac car park. With the new driverless vehicles that whisk people all over the city on congestionless roads, this car park was no longer needed so has been transformed into a thriving single and double level retail and hospitality area. The view shaft to the beach from the Anzac Corner is now complete. The old alleyway has been opened up and the Colmar Brunton building partially removed to bring the beach to the street.

The Anzac Corner as it is now called, is modeled along the lines of a contemporary series of laneways with funky shops, hidden secrets and a large public area allowing for street entertainment with “temporary” style stalls allowing a variety of market-type operators selling market produce and crafts.

The whole Takapuna area is buzzing, locals from the new apartment complex’s dotted around Takapuna and the older more established areas mix and mingle with tourists and folks from out of the area who love Takapuna as a destination.

Gone also is the campground (please don’t slam me for this!!) that is now home to a dedicated public open space with BBQ’s and seating available for everyone. Families dot the area enjoying picnics and having fun.

Visitors to Takapuna enjoy the glass-covered walkways that allow them to move around the area in all weather.

Dedicated pick-up and drop-off areas are dotted around the center with driverless Umbers never more than a few minutes away.

As the sun sets, Takapuna lights up with a busy nightlife scene featuring a myriad of choices for dining, from the cheap and cheerful food stalls to sophisticated fine dining and everything in between.

Events are a regular occurrence in Takapuna, it seems every week there is something on, something to draw you in to the area. Accommodation is always at a premium however with the new hotels the have been added to the mix in Takapuna, there is something to fit all budgets.

### **NARRATIVE TWO:**

I walk into Takapuna from my apartment. It’s a beautiful day and from many places in the city centre I can see the Hauraki Gulf and Rangitoto.

I walk down the Strand to see the visiting exhibition in the Shorex Centre in the old Library building at 2 The Strand. Its free to get in and the travelling exhibition, which would have missed Auckland due to lack of suitable space, is stunning.

Next month, in this centre, is an exhibition about the history of the America’s Cup as its being sailed off the beach. There will be interactive sailing displays and big screens for when the races are on. The street outside will be shut to allow screens on the side of the building for the

expected crowds. Trips out to see the racing will be by RIB from the ramp. The wharf was rejected because of the damage it would do to the sand on the beach.

Today I browse in the several art and craft shops that have opened as a result of the Shorex Centre drawing people to Takapuna interested in art. There are small buses parked that have brought tourists from cruise liners up from Devonport.

As I walk down Hurstmere Road I can cross easily, as it has shared space for pedestrians and cars. I walk through a wide space opposite Hurstmere Green towards the central Plaza. This area has shops and restaurants on both sides and a stunning piece of public art in the middle. The Plaza has low rise buildings on the east side, with restaurants and cafes spilling out into the westerly sun. Above are apartments and offices. I visit the permanent market to buy artisan bread, cheese, fresh vegetables and flowers.

I visit the supermarket and do a bigger shop, which will be delivered later. Parking for short term is underground, and longer term is provided at the gasometer site. Designated cycleways connect to the Skypath and up to the Hospital and Smales Farm.

From The Plaza there is a rising walkway which connects to Como Street at first floor level, and the revamped mall, going over the top of the buses. But I catch a shuttle bus that goes on demand to the Akoranga Bus/train station. There I catch a train under the harbour and get off at Mt Eden station to visit my daughter. The journey back is just as easy.

In the evening I walk down to the beach. The camping ground has gone as it was not viable with a short term lease and a reduced footprint. In its place is a flat area of grass for passive recreation, although at times it is used for events. Many people who live in the apartment blocks have walked down and are sitting on the grass. There is a mobile coffee vendor, and an icecream stall. The library is open every evening, so I call in to pick up a book I ordered on line.

### **NARRATIVE THREE:**

I kiss my daughter goodbye as she does up her helmet and sets off to ride to school. I sigh, finally I feel comfortable allowing her the independence I took for granted as a child, to cycle to school unattended. Ever since they finally made a safe, independent cycle lane and improved the safety of the intersections (with the red-light cameras coupled with better traffic flow, so driver impatience has ceased) I can be sure she can get to school safely.

Many more people are opting for the shuttle that runs to Takapuna also reducing traffic and parking concerns. It is so cheap, reliable and regular and with the greater number of working opportunities so close, fewer people need to access the city and if they do tend to take the shuttle to connect to the ferries (which do not cross environmental sensitive areas). The extra 2-way alternating lane on Lake Road (like on the bridge to align with traffic needs) also assists greatly for when a car is a necessity. Like me today, picking up a weeks-worth of groceries on my one free afternoon while my daughter is at drama. (Free from transporting my child to sport/music, working late or my own fitness class, or getting an afternoon play-date with my girl or hers with her friends).

The extra work opportunities in Takapuna means my partner gets home at a reasonable time and we all get to eat dinner together! After dinner we all take a walk along the walkways passing the beautifully waterways and protected wildlife. In central Takapuna we sit on adult swings and watch the sea from the closed off Strand Road area. One end has access for some cars to park and see the view and there is a mobility area here too. On the Strand/reserve there are fire jugglers, big kids playing on big kid toys (e.g. inflatable jousting, giant blocks), people playing giant chess, the wee kids are in the playground without fear of traffic while parents watch with their coffees having bought food from the markets. (The area has a hard surface and can be used to park cars for special events such as the Anzac parade.) At the far end near the boat club, there is a permanent stage and behind it has vehicular access for boaties and event vehicles (the whole area can be used for parking during special events like parades that flow down Hurstmere Road to the square). Tonight there is music on stage and people are dancing on the grass. Teens get to be out, but they are not hidden away to cause trouble and they are certainly not bored. It is lively and safe. People with cars have parked at the gas-o-meter which has cafes at ground level and apartments above. People walk the lively laneways to get here and mingle. The bordering cafes/restaurants spill out onto this area too.

I look up towards the mall, which is bigger than it used to be. There are several high rise apartments near it, but they layer back from the road allowing light during the day. The bottom floors are all public spaces, cafes, or stores. Many are covered in greenery, all are tastefully designed and some have bars, gardens, play grounds, pools, spas or restaurants on the mid-upper

levels. You can see all the way to the mall from here and I can just catch a glimpse of the skate park and playing court where more teens are burning off energy in a positive way. Fairy lights light the way. The central park (aka square) is surrounded by trees, flowers, art and an edible garden and includes a war memorial statue. The trees are native and labelled and form a small bush walk around the perimeter. There is a group doing Tai Chi in the middle of the square and someone is on a soap box voicing their perspective on the world. People sit and listen, some laugh, some argue, but it is all light-hearted banter. Soft lights come on and the music fades as people disperse to their homes for the evening. There is no lingering about as there is zero-tolerance for anti-social behaviour. I am looking forward to the second stage being completed where the walking/cycle links to the Lake House and PumpHouse are complete. There has obviously been some re-arranging of civic services and not-for-profit organisations but the re-organisation has been well-thought out and services have all been accommodated in suitable locations. The green walk/cycle way around the perimeter of the central blocks has enabled easy access to these venues, which are often shared to ensure high-capacity multi-use quality facilities.

#### **NARRATIVE FOUR:**

Finally, I am staying at Takapuna's first eco friendly 5 star Hotel complex where the North Shore City building used to be.

From my room; Rangitoto view is amazing... All the back streets of Takapuna have 5 or 6 levels of green eco friendly apartment blocks...

I can see the annual Takapuna Beach Summer Days Festival is happening on the Gould Reserve and at the old caravan park which is home to the new Anzac Memorial. Which has a large public space, perfect for regular events and festivals happening through out the year.... There is catering, storage, changing rooms and shower facilities for all sorts of events...

It is amazing to see thousands of kiwis gathering together and celebrating summer Kiwiana style, with many sport activities and entertainment taking place all year around, suitable for all age groups.

In front of my hotel at a public space by Caffe Massimo, I am gathering with my friends for drinks on a fantastic summer evening listening to world famous producer/vocalist/saxophonist Nathan Haines...

We go for a walk down The Strand and It looks amazing, people everywhere socialising, eating, drinking and dancing under the stars... You can see huge grins on every persons face.

It is amazing to see history and art of the Maori culture amazingly displayed all the way around The Strand and Hurstmere Green...

By the way, as part of the Summer festival celebrations the New Art Gallery has Americas Cup Exhibition with massive display screens outside their entrance...

The Strand now upgraded as a more pedestrian and car friendly road with cafes, restaurants and bars...

They do close The Strand for traffic during weekends where people parks their cars underneath the new affordable, home and Tech office style eco apartment complex on the old Anzac street Carpark. An amazing walk to the beach through Hurstmere Green where all the cafes, restaurants and bars decorate the suburb.



Long term parking is provided at Gasometer site... Designated cycleways connect the Skypath to Smales Farm.

Eco Apartments are designed perfectly well and not too high around Takapuna so residents don't complain. Like they do in Sentinel regarding noise from people on the streets, restaurants and bars...

The Strand has many activities on the weekend especially during summer time as well as hosting the weekly Sunday market... Hurstmere road retailers are open during early evenings, so people can still do shopping...

Time to go back to my room and rest for tomorrow's activities... Can't wait to go to the Classic Open Air Cinema tomorrow night on the beach...

### **NARRATIVE FIVE:**

It is such a beautiful day I am glad to be going to Takapuna beach to catch up with my friends. I am relieved to find a park by Café Massimo close to the beach as I have a few things to carry for the picnic. It is great to see the council have upgraded the mobility parks so they are now easy to use and I have enough space to get my wheelchair out and I can be assured I won't get parked in by another car like I used to. With my picnic food on my lap I head down to the beach.

The footpaths have all been upgraded to make it more pedestrian friendly so no more cobbles or difficult curb cuts thank goodness. I manage to get across the roads and across the curbs without dropping any of my picnic food, it is much easier now the curb cuts have been evened out and crossings have been raised and it feels great to be so independent. We are meeting by the rubber matting on the sand that has been put down so those who have difficulty walking on sand and people who need wheels to get around can still enjoy the beach, I notice elderly folk and people with prams are also making use of this. It's a great feeling to be on the beach, something I haven't been able to do independently since my injury. It is amazing to be able to do something I thought might be lost forever and it is so nice to be included. I say hi to Sara and Jane and add my food to the picnic.

We have a lovely picnic and afterwards we all need to use the bathroom. The accessible bathroom has been well designed with a hand rail in the right place and a toilet at the right height which is such a relief. I find it so humiliating when I have to find another bathroom or go home as the bathroom is not set up correctly.

I notice the new boardwalk that has been built along the front of Gould reserve and suggest we check it out. The boardwalk is undulating like the one at St Kilda in Melbourne. People of all ages and abilities all flow along it beautifully, it goes down to be close to the beach and back up to be level with the park so people can be close to the sand but still in the park. I see people pushing prams, kids on bikes, runners, walkers and elderly folk all considerably moving around each other.

We decide to go and check out the market, on our journey I notice Hurstmere road is now a shared space for cars and pedestrians so there are much fewer cars and pedestrians use the road with ease. We head up to what used to be the old car park which has been turned into a mixture of cafés and retail shops which have all been nicely decorated in greenery and beautiful big pot plants so it feels peaceful and cosy. There is an open green space too with people lying on bean bags enjoying the sun and there is a space for the market which is full of specialty foods, fruit and vegetables and flowers for sale. I am so impressed at how well they have used this space it reminds me a little of Britomart but this space is even more peaceful.

We all choose some treats from the market then it is time to go home, we say our goodbyes after a lovely day. I head back to the car feeling so grateful I was able to join in on today's activities.

### **NARRATIVE SIX:**

We are standing in Potters' Park looking south-east into the old Central carpark. Gone is the Burger King/TAB building and the old toilet block. Trees in this space have been re-arranged. Trees have been removed from the former boundary between Potters' Park and the Central carpark.

The two spaces combined form a square of about 6,500m<sup>2</sup> (ie 80m<sup>2</sup>). The perimeter on two sides adjacent to the Central car park is appropriately framed and delineated with clear entry and exit points for formed bodies of men and women. The re-designed and re-landscaped civic square is an amazing public space, which is used for all sorts of public and private gatherings, formal and informal: ANZAC Day parades and other civic commemoration ceremonies, public ceremonies and all descriptions, open air concerts, displays, public meetings and so on. The Takapuna War Memorial has been re-sited appropriately and forms the focal point for ceremonies of commemoration and remembrance. The Civic Plaza has a retractable roof making it an all weather venue.

Takapuna truly has a civic centre at it's heart, at last, and of which all citizens are extremely proud.

The 260 short stay car park spaces on the former Central carpark have been relocated in a multi-level building on the old Takapuna Police Station site across the road. In the fullness of time the short stay parking will be under-grounded, freeing land up for development.

By clever planning, the Sunday market occupies the Civic Square/Plaza and surrounding footpaths. The retractable roofing has been a great boon. The bus station has been underground underneath Anzac Street/Lake Road and the Civic Square.

Standing on the Civic Plaza looking south-east you are looking across the old carpark in the direction of Hurstmere Green and Rangitoto beyond. The view shafts from the old carpark have been widened and framed by a broad arcade. The foliage on Hurstmere Green and the Beach Reserve has been re-designed to create a wonderful panoramic view of the beach, the sea and Rangitoto beyond, truly a remarkable seascape. None better.

Truly this is the finest city beach and seascape in Auckland and probably New Zealand.

Beyond Hurstmere Green and the re-modelled Colmar Brunton building, the carparks and the Strand have been undergrounded, and the resulting surface contour now forms a continuous sward from Hurstmere Green to the beach.

Elsewhere Hurstmere Road has been completely revamped creating a much improved pedestrian/cycle/traffic environment. Lake Road and Hurstmere Road are one way. Central Takapuna is now a very friendly cycle and pedestrian environment.

Ample medium and long stay parking has been built on the Gasometer site, including provision for an extended bus station underground.

Takapuna CBD is adjusting it's focus and orientation towards the East, Takapuna Beach, Rangitoto Channel, Rangitoto and the other islands of the inner Hauraki Gulf.

Truly an amazing seascape

### **NARRATIVE SEVEN:**

Time has just flown by since our last meeting of the Greater Takapuna Reference Group and the year is now 2018. Auckland Transport has implemented the New Network for the North Shore and so I catch the N42 service from my home in Forrest Hill which drops me off at the Takapuna interchange. Thankfully there is much greater buy-in into public transport now. This is because it has been made more affordable through the zone-based faring system, and more convenient due to the increased frequency of bus services along key routes. People don't seem to mind having to make more transfers as it is the duration of the total journey that commuters tend to be more concerned about. The "first and last mile" issue has been resolved in part through the implementation of electric bicycle sharing schemes which are complemented by more dedicated bike lanes. Uber has been popularised as well and practically functions as part of public transport infrastructure. The Anzac street carpark is now a plaza. It offers open space to the public along with multi-storey complexes which provide quality apartments and increase the retail offering of our town centre. Much like the people of Auckland, businesses are desperate to make Takapuna their home. This is a stellar outcome as it provides consumers with greater variety and choice, whilst allowing the precinct to be more selective in curating what is an internationally competitive but yet locally focussed marketplace. The Burger King building is gone and what was once a repulsive and undermaintained toilet block has finally been enhanced and absorbed into the complex. Potters Park has experienced significant revitalisation as well and is now an urban design award-winning feature similar to Hurstmere Green. It has a beautiful little garden and plenty of seats and benches designed in the most artistic and innovative of ways. The Sunday Market is still well and alive, but is now situated in Smales Farm. This positioning has actually been beneficial for sellers as they have managed to retain a lot of their existing buyers, whilst also picking new market segments attracted by the ease of getting to a major public transport

node like the Smales Farm Bus Station. The larger footprint has also provided capacity for this fine establishment to expand! Techapuna is at long last an incredible reality. Economic activity during the week is driven by a network of high-tech companies and start-up firms who operate within innovative and collaborative workspaces such as Bizdojo, B:Hive, and hopefully more. The Youth Innovation Centre on Mary Poynton Crescent fosters entrepreneurial spirit and incubates the talent inherent in our young people. It is also a pipeline connecting businesses which the future leaders and pioneers of their industries. Millennials are great with regard to transport due to their lesser dependency on private vehicles for mobility, and are attracted to working in Takapuna due to the relaxed lifestyle and stunning mix of natural and cultural features and developments. The Gasometer site is a multi-level carparking facility, complete with an online application which informs users of the availability of spaces and a booking function to allow prior planning. Hurstmere Road is pedestrianised, and hosts many attractive laneways which connect the beach to the town centre. Takapuna looks different now, but somehow it has managed to retain that same “city rhythm, beach vibe” feeling.

### **‘SUPER’ NARRATIVE:**

The year is 2020. Takapuna’s resident population has increased significantly, and the metropolitan centre has changed in a similar fashion due to this rapid growth. To begin with the Anzac Street carpark site has been activated as a civic centre hosting public open space and mixed use development. Multi storey complexes offer a variety of retail and hospitality opportunities, a home for public services like the library and community agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, as well as quality apartments on the higher levels. The Burger King and TAB building are gone along with the old toilet block which has been absorbed into the complex. The ANZAC War Memorial previously found on The Strand has been relocated to this civic centre, where Potters Park as a key feature has also experienced outstanding revitalisation. The Takapuna bus stops have been upgraded, and an electric bicycle sharing scheme has been implemented as part of a wider network spanning the North Shore and Auckland. The popular Sunday Market is still well and alive, but is now situated in Smales Farm where it has retained a large portion of its existing buyers and captured new market segments attracted by the ease of getting to its location adjacent to a major public transport node. All architecture and urban design in Takapuna is now sensitive of the need for universal access. This is evident in the enhanced quality and greater quantity of disabled bathrooms, the use ramps instead of stairs where feasible, and the elimination of cobbles and cuts in footpaths and curbs which create discomfort for our wheeled users. Furthermore a boardwalk has been installed along the beach to enable people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the beauty of what can be considered Takapuna’s most valuable natural asset. Environmental sensitivity can be experienced principally in the way in which the ambience of the beach is impressed upon the civic centre through a lattice of attractive laneways. Maori culture and identity is reflected all around in the most innovative and artistic of ways. Events which cultivate community are a key element of the new Takapuna. They occur through increased cooperation between organisers and Council, and through the clever activation of versatile spaces such as the now pedestrianised Hurstmere Road. The Strand has been reframed to be a lot more pedestrian friendly as well, in particular as the road converges with the beach. People are empowered through urban design to feel safe, connected, relaxed, and to enjoy more of what our community can offer. The Gasometer site is now a multi-level car parking facility, complete with real time parking functions and accommodating largely long stay parkers. The development is adaptable; allowing apartments to be built on higher levels should it become necessary to do so in the future. Much like the people of Auckland, businesses are desperate to make Takapuna their home. High technology firms have congregated in our commercial precinct – creating, diversifying, and future proofing employment opportunities for locals whilst driving long term economic development. Takapuna looks so different now, but has somehow managed to retain its ability to offer an authentic experience for all.