

Auckland Design Office Memo

To: Mayor Phil Goff, Councillors, Waitemata Local Board Reps and Independent Māori Statutory Board Members

From: Ludo Campbell-Reid

CC: Jim Quinn (Chief Strategy Officer), Dean Kimpton (Chief Operating Officer) , Megan Tyler (Exec officer to CSO), Simon Oddie (Development Programme Office), Tim Fitzpatrick (Auckland Design Office), Theunis Van Schalkwyk (Auckland Transport), Daniel Newcombe (Auckland Transport) , George Weeks (Auckland Design Office), Kalinda Gopal (Democracy Services)

Date: 17 August 2017

Dear Mayor Phil, Members of the Auckland Planning Committee, Waitemata Local Board Representatives and Members of the Independent Māori Statutory Board.

Subject: City Centre Workshop (Downtown /Midtown) Follow up

On behalf of the teams from across the Council family group who presented at the workshop in unified force, thank you very much for your attention, feedback and support at last week's workshop for Downtown and Midtown Auckland.

There was clear excitement with the shared vision for the city centre's future development and it was apparent that a watershed moment had been reached in terms of getting collective cross organisational resolution to some complex placemaking issues. For us all this is why we do this job, serving you as best we can and having inspiring moments like this when it all comes together. Nothing better...

Our team came away buzzing with excitement. This was tempered by acknowledgement that sustained support and coordinated funding will be needed to deliver this vision within narrow construction windows.

In terms of next steps we felt a quick follow up note would be useful to re-capture key points raised during the workshop. These are best articulated in two parts: part 1 - City Centre Macro Economic Context and Part 2 – Downtown & Midtown Project Specifics.

PART 1: Macro-Economic Context

As with any major city, a strong urban core is inherent for the prosperity and wellbeing of the entire Auckland city-region. We showed how Auckland's public realm has been transformed and how this, coupled with better public transport, has led to a booming city centre that despite only covering 0.08% of Auckland's surface area now generates some 7.4% of New Zealand's GDP.

We also talked about the excellent [RIMU research](#) that shows the powerful relationship between walkability and productivity; with an increase of 1% in walkability within Auckland's City Centre and an equivalent City Centre GDP increase of NZ\$43M. The fastest growing and most valuable employment sectors are those that are based in the city centre and their business success depends on face-to-face contact; banking, law, consulting, insurance and technology. Auckland city centre therefore needs to continue to be easier to get to, easier to get around and more pleasant to be in. This requires constant and continued investment in quality urban realm and quality transport.

Auckland is already scheduled to invest a record amount in its public transport. What we are seeking to do is maximise the benefits of these investments through complementary investments in a high quality public realm. These will bring about the next set of urban street transformations in the city centre, transforming the accessibility of downtown and midtown through a coordinated approach to public realm and public transport.

You had previously asked us to work more closely with Auckland Transport to deliver positive solutions for public realm and public transport in the city centre. We showed how Auckland Council, Auckland Transport, Panuku and other organisations have worked collaboratively together to develop shared visions for the Downtown and Midtown areas of the city centre, consistent with the City Centre Masterplan 2012.

PART 2: Downtown and Midtown Project Specifics

The vision for Downtown sees the creation of Quay Street and Lower Queen Street as a pedestrian-centred spaces; the "front door" to Auckland. We showed how the main components of this vision can be split into a series of geographical areas, with a central pedestrian core served by public transport in the east and west, along with existing ferries and trains and future mass transit. The hosting of APEC and hosting of the America's Cup would provide an impetus to create a legacy of high-quality public space before 2021. Cities need deadlines and Major Events have always been a clever way for Cities to undertake significant public works in short timescales simply because the world is watching.

The Midtown vision is centred on creating "Two Great Streets", with Wellesley Street as a high-quality bus boulevard, enabling Victoria Street to develop into a Linear Park (see image). This addresses a very strong public desire for a new greened public space in central Auckland; moreover it begins to join the relatively underdeveloped western edge of the city to the centre. This connection will both enable and provide for this area's growth potential.

Midtown also acknowledges Wellesley Street's civic function and the extent to which these two east-west axes complement one another and the surrounding pedestrian network. With City Rail Link, Mass Transit and the New Bus Network, this will be a major public transport node in central Auckland (see pics). The bus stops, rail station and Mass Transit stops will bring thousands of people into the area every day, functioning as what may be termed "pedestrian fountains".

This transformation of public transport connectivity coupled with a high-quality walking environment has the potential to energise all of Midtown, particularly the Engine Room and the Learning Quarter.

With City Rail Link and the New Bus Network under construction, Auckland City Centre will undergo significant construction disruption over the next Long Term Plan period. We showed how funding and delivery of project components can take place within these limited construction windows. This would allow delivery of maximum benefits with minimum disruption. It also requires careful coordination of construction and associated funding to deliver an optimal outcome for Auckland.

You have also asked for stories for your constituents, to summarise the proposals in a way that will resonate with them. We will get cracking and supply you with material that addresses this requirement. We envisage an overall City Centre Summary document accompanied by more place specific material relating to the direct impacts and benefits to particular communities.

Lastly: My team and I remain always willing to take you through the material and can make ourselves available if you would like us to support you with discussions in your respective constituencies.

Our colleagues at Auckland Transport will be preparing additional detailed material on the emerging public transport plans and intend to undertake further public consultation on these as part of project development.

Thank you once again for your support and we look forward to working with you all to deliver these exciting visions for a better city centre at the beating heart of Auckland.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ludo Campbell-Reid', written in a cursive style.

Ludo Campbell-Reid
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Photo Courtesy of Auckland
Council's Auckland Design Office

Potential Victoria St West Linear
Park
View from Elliot St

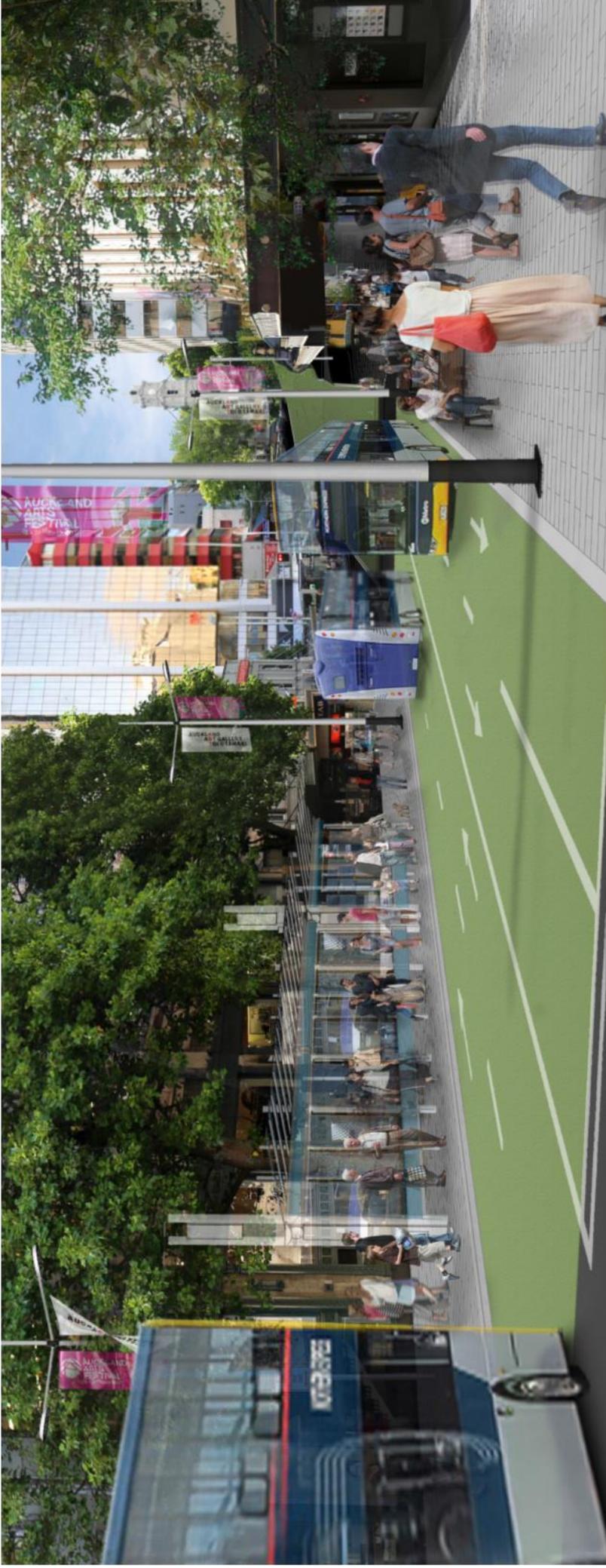


Photo Courtesy of Auckland Transport

Potential Wellesley St West Bus
Boulevard

View from Elliot & Bledisloe Intersection