



Te whakatutuki i te reiti mō te pokapū tāone i Tāmaki Makaurau 2023/2024

# City Centre Targeted Rate Annual Report 2023/2024





# Auckland's city centre – overview

Auckland's city centre is the vibrant heart of Tāmaki Makaurau, vital to its ongoing development and success.

It is the area in which Auckland was established in 1840, by William Hobson on land gifted by mana whenua hapū Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. It is a place where leading New Zealand and global businesses thrive, a destination for events, arts and culture, home to over 38,000 residents and the location for two universities where 70,000 students learn. The city centre is a highly productive location that generates 21 per cent of Auckland's gross domestic product<sup>1</sup> and attracts 16 per cent of the region's workforce (157,000 people)<sup>2</sup>.

The City Centre Masterplan is the council group's key guiding document for the city centre, outlining the strategic direction for the next 20 years. The City Centre Action Plan is the council group's agreed implementation pathway for the masterplan.



# The city centre targeted rate

The city centre targeted rate (CCTR) funds development and revitalisation of the city centre to enhance the city centre as a place to work, live, visit and do business. It achieves this by providing a high-quality urban environment, promoting the competitive advantages of the city centre as a business location, and being a place for high-quality education and urban living.

The CCTR is paid by city centre commercial and residential property owners, collecting around \$27 million annually for city centre projects. Over \$280 million is planned for CCTR investment in the council's long-term plan from financial years 2025 to 2031. Any unspent funds are ringfenced for future city centre projects.

## City centre targeted rate boundary



1. <https://rep.infometrics.co.nz/auckland-city/economy/growth?compare=auckland>  
2. <https://rep.infometrics.co.nz/auckland-city/employment/growth?compare=auckland>



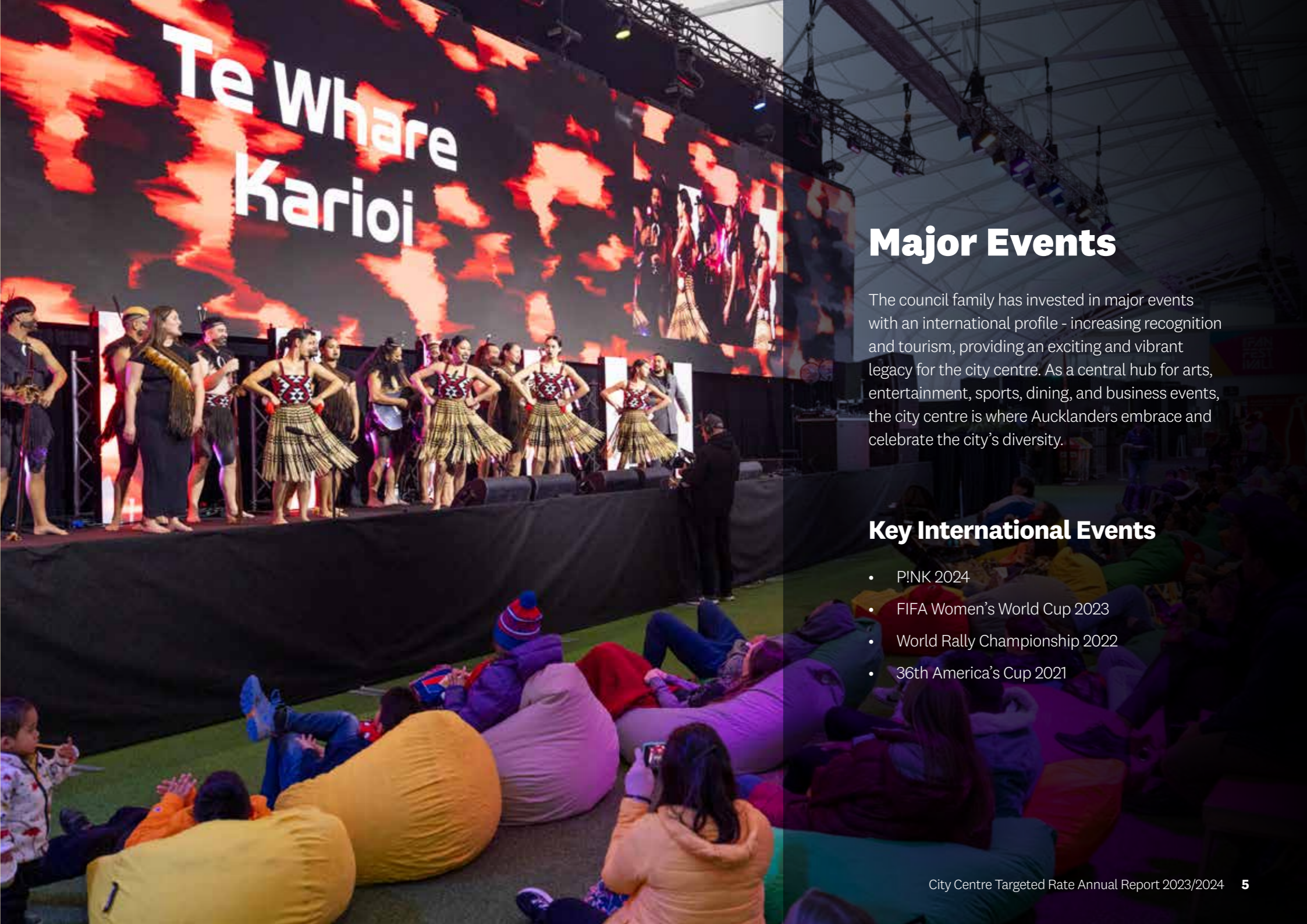
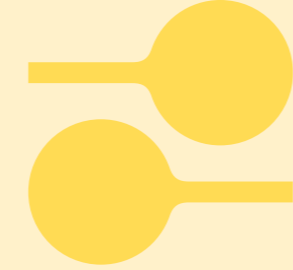
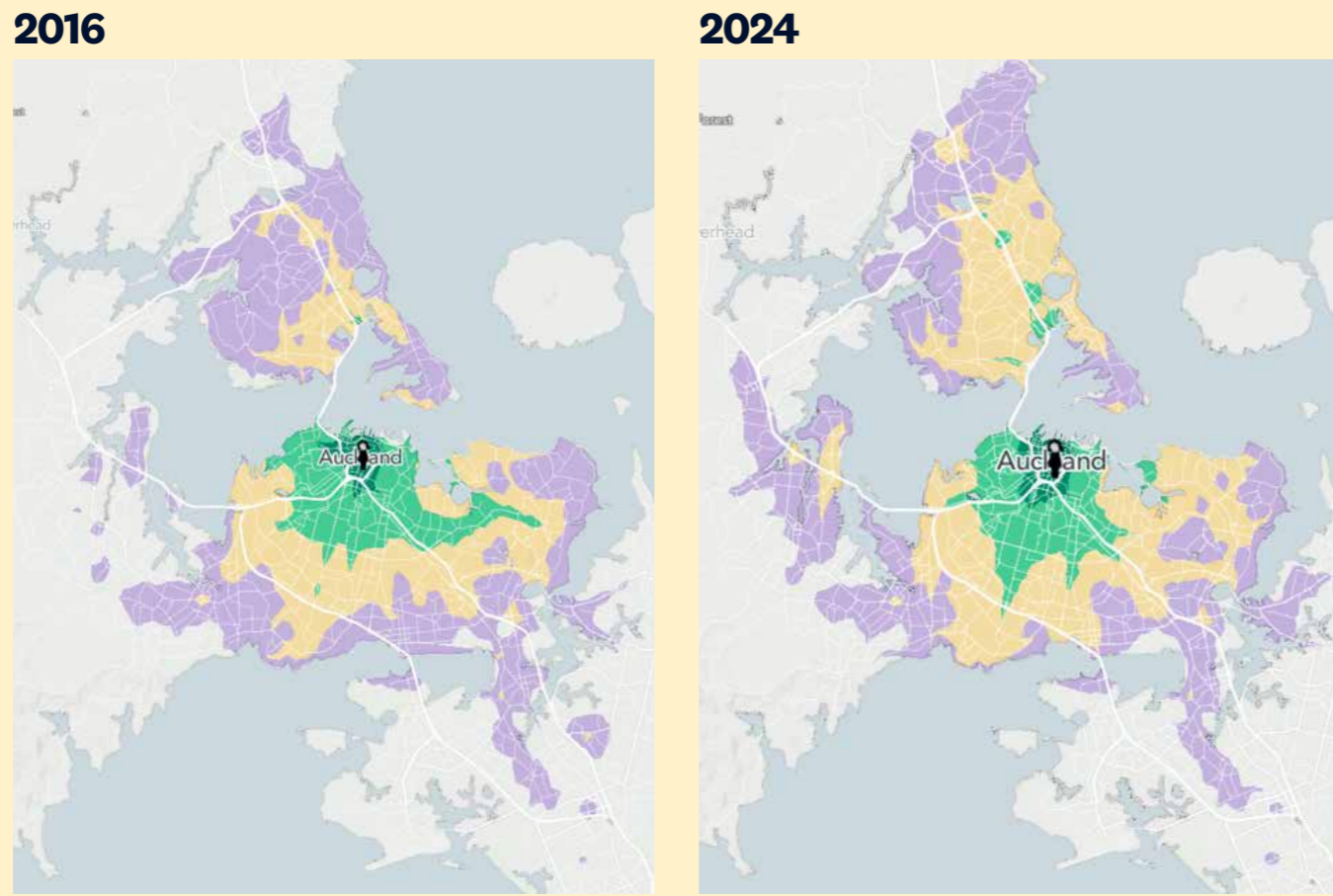
# Investing in the city centre

Auckland Council recognise that investing in the city centre is an investment in the region’s future prosperity. The City Centre Masterplan is focused on increasing the number of workers and residents in the city centre by making it a more accessible and attractive place to live and work.

## Transport

Auckland’s transport network – roads, water and rail – converges on the city centre. Achieving the City Centre Masterplan vision hinges on effective transport infrastructure. The council’s continued efforts to improve capacity and interconnections between buses, trains and ferries has reinforced the city centre’s role as a transport hub. Construction of the City Rail Link is the most critical transport element in unlocking the city centre’s potential.

**Length of time taken to reach the intersection of Queen and Wellesley Streets, by walking and taking public transport, starting at 07.30am on a weekday**



## Major Events

The council family has invested in major events with an international profile - increasing recognition and tourism, providing an exciting and vibrant legacy for the city centre. As a central hub for arts, entertainment, sports, dining, and business events, the city centre is where Aucklanders embrace and celebrate the city’s diversity.

### Key International Events

- PINK 2024
- FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023
- World Rally Championship 2022
- 36th America’s Cup 2021



# City centre targeted rate enhances the urban environment

The CCTR has been instrumental in enhancing the streets and public spaces in the city centre, alongside other council investments. Key developments include the shared space programme and laneways, improvements to parks, plazas and waterfront development.

CCTR investment has vastly improved the quality and attractiveness of the urban environment and residential living, improved stormwater quality, tree cover and biodiversity. The investment has made the city centre a better place to be.

2013 – Fort Street



2014 – Khartoum Place



2014 – O’Connell Street



2017 – Freyberg Square



2018 – Beach Road



2020 – High Street Pilot



2020 – Te Komitanga Square



2021 – Karangahape Road



2021 – Quay Street



2022 – Queen Street



2022 – Federal Street Stage 2



2023 – Galway Street

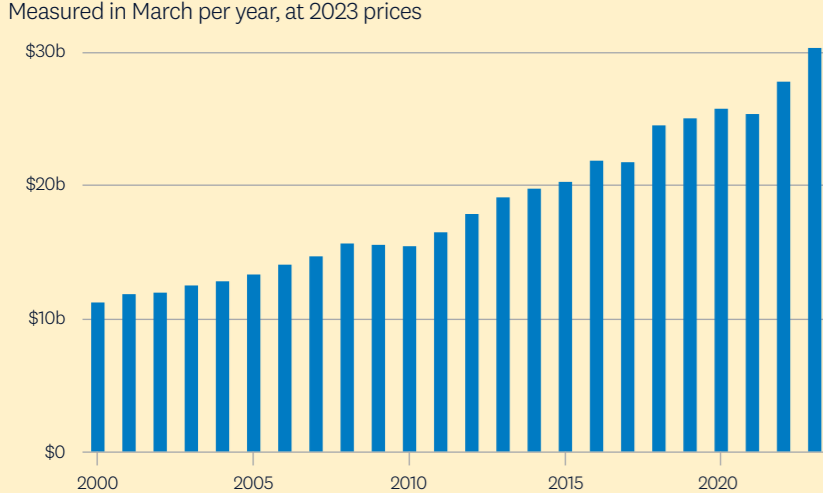




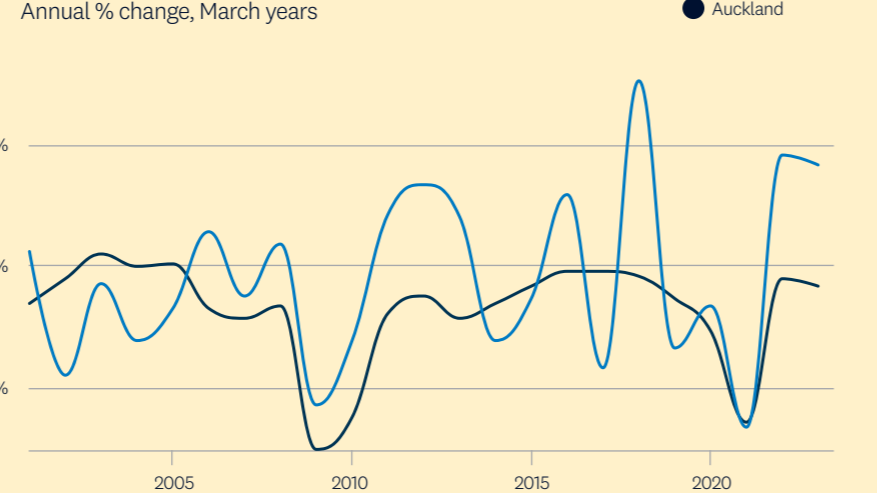
# Growth in the city centre

Auckland Council’s investment, supported by the CCTR, has contributed to the ongoing growth, productivity and attractiveness of the city centre as a place for people to live, work and visit.

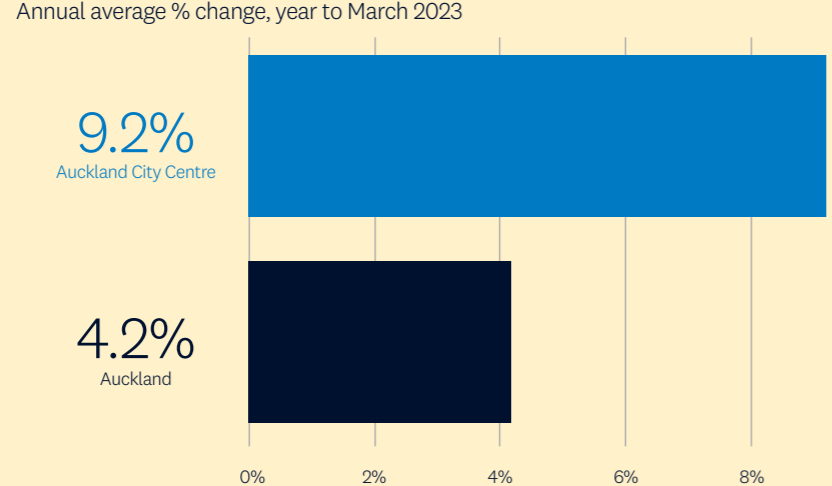
## City centre gross domestic product



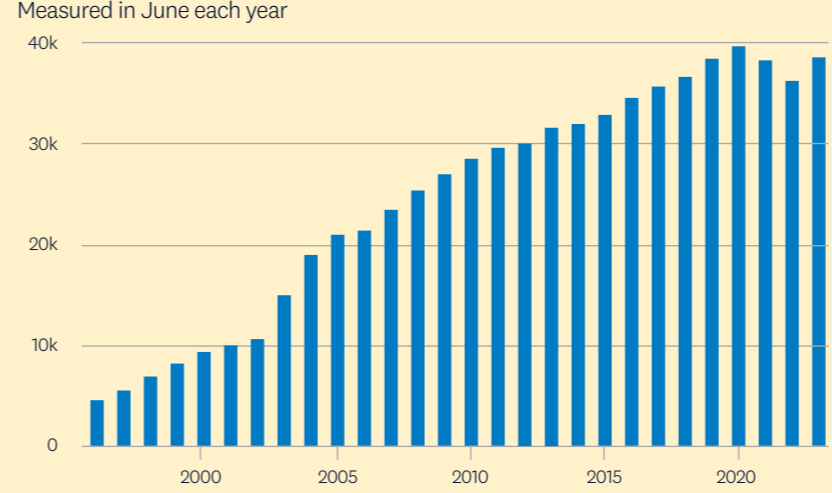
## City centre gross domestic product growth



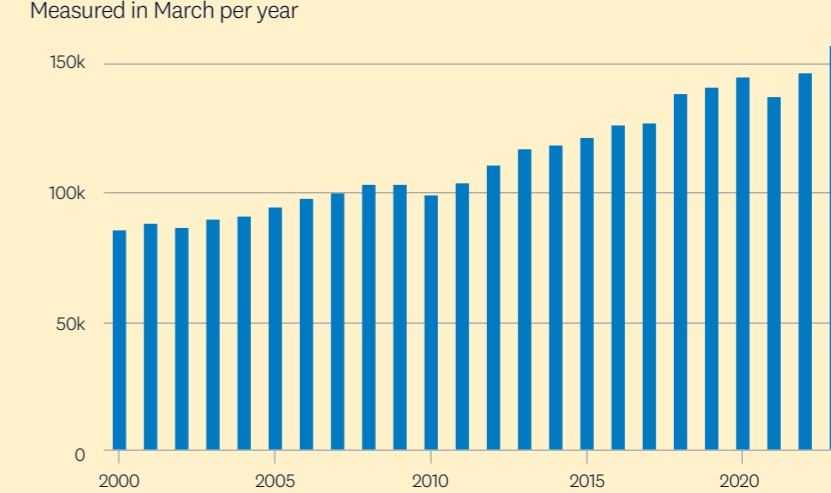
## City centre gross domestic product (compared to region)



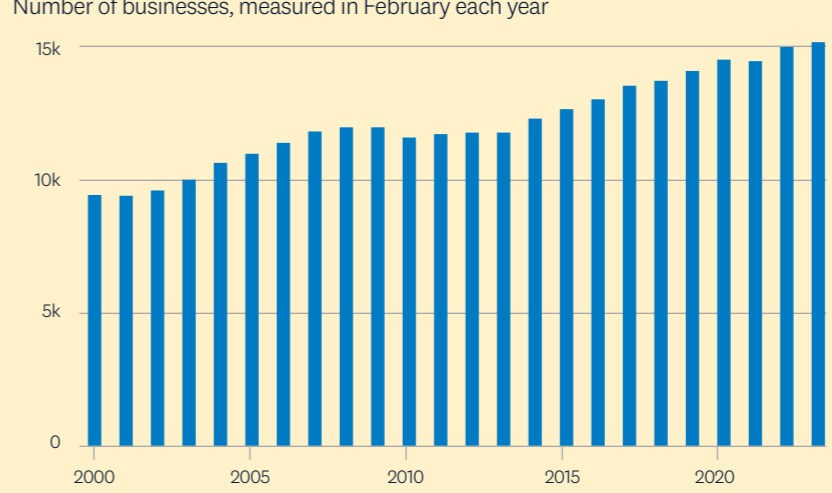
## City centre residential population



## City centre employment

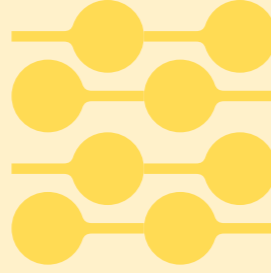


## City centre businesses



In recent years, the city centre was exposed to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including disrupted international connections and extended lockdowns.

# City centre targeted rate investment priorities

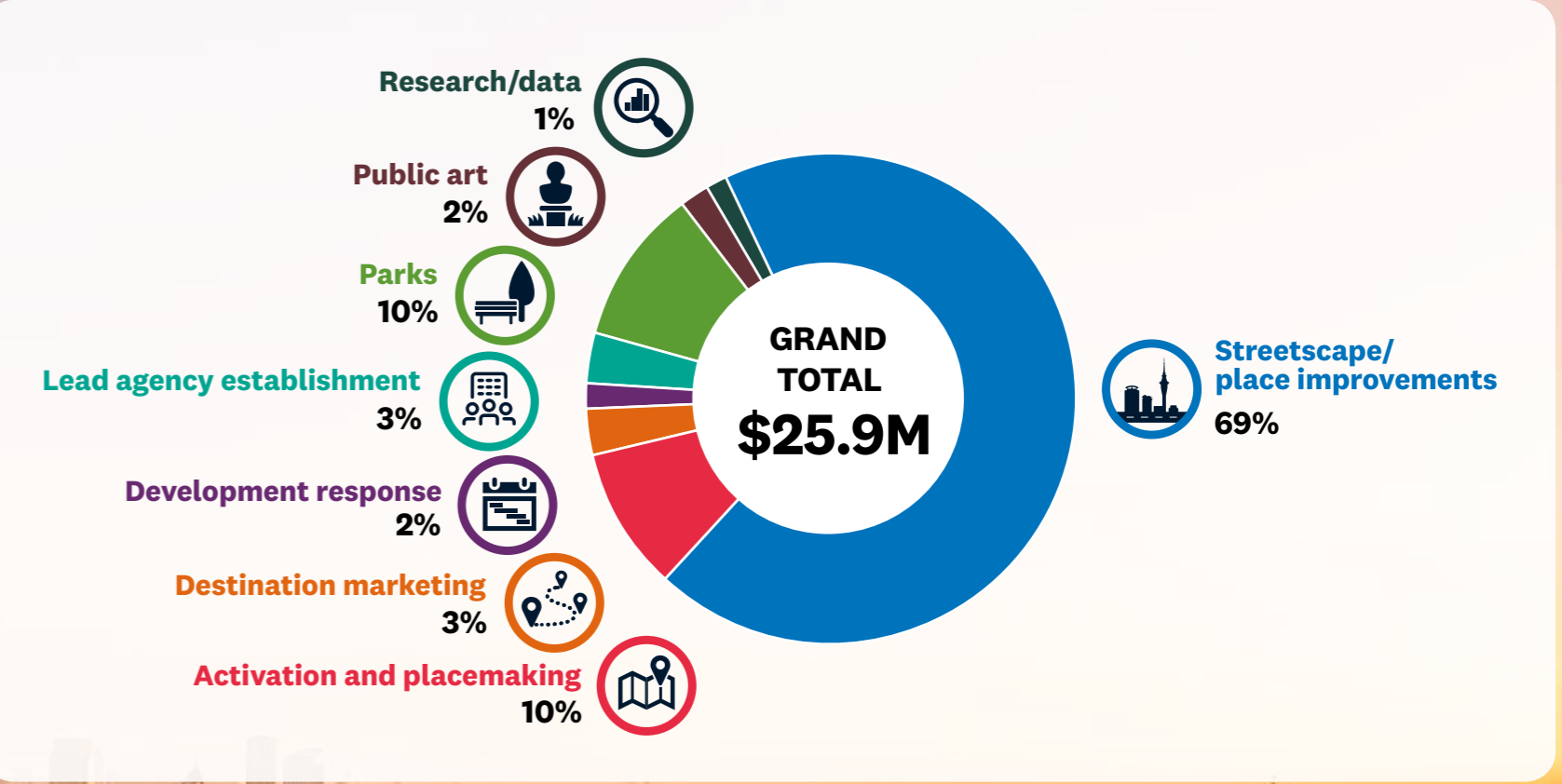


Investment priorities for the CCTR established as part of the Long-Term Plan 2021-2031 were focussed on the following outcomes for the city centre:

- **Waihorotiu Queen Street Valley and rapid transit-oriented development around the City Rail Link stations** – Supporting development around the Te Waihorotiu and Karanga-a-Hape City Rail Link stations. This includes fostering growth near the City Rail Link stations, creating pedestrian-friendly streets, improving public spaces, and enhancing safe access. The goal is to reinforce Queen Street Valley as the cultural, commercial and retail hub of Tāmaki Makaurau.
- **City to the villages** – Enhancing development at the city fringe and improving connections to ensure safe, accessible, and enjoyable journeys to and from the city centre.
- **Green links** – Investing in initiatives to connect green spaces and address climate change. This involves increasing planting and canopy cover in the city centre and supporting sustainable development.
- **Public life** – Creating a vibrant, healthy, and inviting environment to attract people to the city centre.
- **Our place in the world** – Celebrating the unique identity and culture of Tāmaki Makaurau within the city centre.
- **Residential neighbourhoods** – Promoting residential growth, improving quality of life, and enhancing the wellbeing of city centre residents.

# CCTR expenditure 2023/2024

Expenditure in financial year 2023/2024 was concentrated in the Waihorotiu Queen Street Valley area. The current programme for the CCTR is focussed on the delivery of the midtown programme, including place improvements for Te Hā Noa – Victoria Street.





# Achievements in 2023-2024



## A vibrant and attractive city centre

The CCTR supports diverse, vibrant and prosperous public spaces through activation and placemaking. Highlights of the CCTR-funded activation and placemaking programme in 2023/2024 include:

### Matariki ki te Manawa 11-22 July 2023 and 15-28 June 2024

- An annual programme to showcase Māori culture and identity in the city centre, in collaboration with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. Each programme delivered more than 50 free public events, performances, dance, workshops and traditional and contemporary arts.
- Four major lighting installations across the city centre including *Tūrama* which returned to Queen Street, and in 2024 the new *Whai* was created on the Victoria Street carpark.

**87%** of respondents agreed that activities and attractions like Matariki ki te Manawa 2024, make them happy to be in Auckland.

**88%** of respondents agreed that activities and attractions like this attract them to the city centre.

**97%** of respondents agreed that these types of activities should be supported by Auckland Council.



*Tūrama by Graham Tipene (Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Haua, Ngāti Manu), Ataahua Papa (Ngāti Korokī Kahukura, Ngāti Mahuta) and Angus Muir Design*



*Whai by Janine Williams (Ngāti Paoa, Te Uri o Hao) photo credit: Bryan Lowe*

## Christmas 2023

- Christmas in the City Centre 2023, aimed at attracting people to the city centre in the key pre-Christmas trading period. It featured the Christmas pavilion in Te Komititanga with more than 100 performances across 23 days, alongside Christmas performances on Queen Street, and Christmas in the Square at Aotea Square.

**98%** rated the entertainment very good or excellent.

**89%** agree or strongly agree events like the Christmas Pavilion 'attract me to the city centre'.



*Christmas in Te Komititanga*

## Lunar New Year 10-25 February 2024

- The first Lunar New Year festival in Auckland's city centre. A contemporary pan-Asian celebration of culture, the festival leveraged the wide range of Asian-owned retail and hospitality in the city centre.
- Scheduled in February, one of a range of events and activities which encourage Aucklanders to re-engage with the city centre after the summer holidays and showcase the diversity of our city.
- The celebration included 18 activities and events delivered by Auckland Council, alongside additional programming by partners such as Heart of the City.

**100%** of survey respondents say events like this attract them to the city centre and make me happy to be in Auckland.

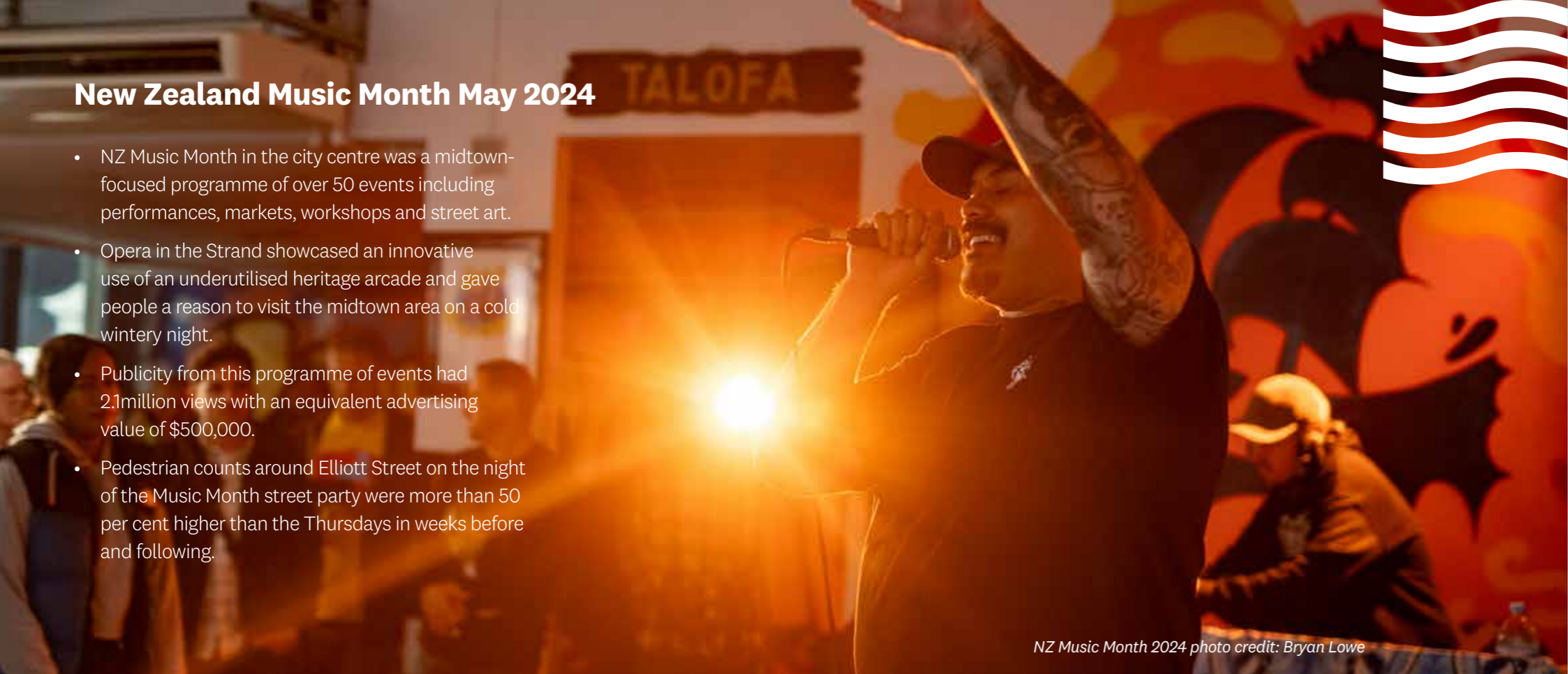


*Lunar New Year 2024*



## New Zealand Music Month May 2024

- NZ Music Month in the city centre was a midtown-focused programme of over 50 events including performances, markets, workshops and street art.
- Opera in the Strand showcased an innovative use of an underutilised heritage arcade and gave people a reason to visit the midtown area on a cold wintery night.
- Publicity from this programme of events had 2.1million views with an equivalent advertising value of \$500,000.
- Pedestrian counts around Elliott Street on the night of the Music Month street party were more than 50 per cent higher than the Thursdays in weeks before and following.



NZ Music Month 2024 photo credit: Bryan Lowe

Opera in the Strand



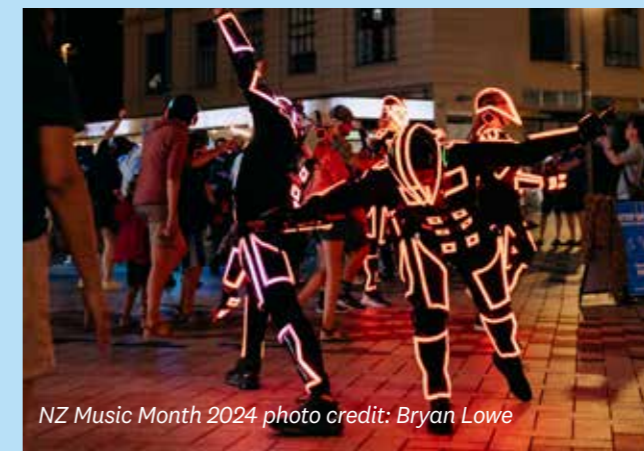
NZ Music Month 2024

### Placemaking and priority areas

- The placemaking pilot in **Te Komititanga** from July 2023 to May 2024 delivered eight events across 15 dates, including a Silent DJ Battle, Children’s Day, Making Friends Café for Valentines, The Downtown Market and a school holiday Makerspace.
- Expanded public programming in **Aotea Square**, highlights included Christmas and Summer in the Square, The String Symphony, Afrofest, Auckland Latin Fiesta, and circus workshops in the April School Holidays.
- Supported the Karangahape Road Business Association to provide free and accessible public events which celebrate K Road’s unique identity. Highlights this year included Halloween, Anti Valentines Day, and a street party for Matariki 2024 which trialled closing a section of street to traffic and making it available for people alongside more than 70 events.
- An activation programme in **Myers Park**, to encourage people to keep visiting the park during the construction period, expanding the regional Out and About programme, creating outdoor education and recreation opportunities for city centre families.



Afrofest



NZ Music Month 2024 photo credit: Bryan Lowe



Making Friends Cafe



String Symphony by Mitchell Hancock

The CCTR also supported expanded public programming in other festivals and events such as Record Store Day, Pride Festival, Africa Month, Auckland Arts Festival, Nowruz and the Auckland Festival of Photography.



# Visitor attraction and promoting the city centre

The City Centre Advisory Panel reinforced the importance of investment in visitor attraction and destination marketing to grow visitation and support businesses in the city centre. In 2023/2024, the CCTR supported the following destination marketing campaigns and initiatives:

- Expanding the reach of Heart of the City-led campaigns including Restaurant Month (August 2023), Artweek (October 2023 and 2024) and Christmas 2023.
- Karangahape Road Business Association created a new destination marketing campaign showcasing the hospitality offering in Karangahape Road, 'Eat It' launched in June 2024.
- Enabled Tātaki Auckland Unlimited to deliver an improved welcome experience for cruise ship passengers, and to leverage a Tourism New Zealand campaign to re-excite New Zealanders about their city centres.

Building positive sentiments through the media and social media channels on the city centre has been a key tool in improving overall perceptions of the city centre and encouraging Aucklanders to come and check it out for themselves.



Christmas in Te Komitanga

In 2023/2024, council's publicists achieved excellent results leveraging CCTR funded activity:

## Make the Most of Auckland

Activations, events and public programming including Matariki, Festive, Lunar New Year and Music Month.

Reach:

**17.9m**

viewers, equivalent to

**\$4.36m**

advertising value

+

## Build a Better Auckland

Improvement projects such as Myers Park, Te Wharekura and Federal Street public art, as well as city centre economic performance.

Reach:

**5.94m**

viewers, equivalent to

**\$1.81m**

advertising value

=

## Total City Centre Programme earned media:

Reach:

**23.84m**

viewers, equivalent to

**\$6.17m**

advertising value



# Midtown Regeneration Programme and supporting the city centre through change

The Midtown Regeneration Programme is designed to rejuvenate the area, future-proof infrastructure, bring new energy to public spaces and prepare for a significant increase in the number of residents, workers and visitors when the City Rail Link’s Te Waihorotiu Station opens.

## Completion of Myers Park upgrade

The much-anticipated upgrade of the northern end of Myers Park was opened in December 2023. Designed with inclusivity in mind, the improved connection between Aotea Square, Myers Park and Queen Street enables access for all ages and abilities. The project delivered a new boardwalk, 24 new native trees, a wetland garden, flood mitigation elements to collect and drain extreme rainfall, concrete detailing in the underpass and a new stairway to Queen Street.

Waimahara, a multi-sensory, mana whenua-led artwork experience integrated into the underpass, has elevated this area. This public artwork was created by artist Graham Tipene (Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Hāua, Ngāti Manu) and features two original waiata composed by Moeahi Kerehoma (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, Te Whakatōhea, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Tūhoe, Ngāi Takoto, Te Rarawa), Tarumai-i-Tawhiti Kerehoma-Hoani (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei,

Te Whakatōhea, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Tūhoe, Ngāi Takoto, Te Rarawa), and Tuirina Wehi (Ngāti Ruapani).

Fully interactive since June 2024, Waimahara offers a sensorial experience with light and audio effects, including birdsong, taonga pūoro, and water sounds. The experience is dynamic, responding to visitors and weather conditions, creating a unique ambiance at this Tāmaki Makaurau site. The artwork is funded through Auckland Council’s Regional Public Art capital expenditure fund.

The project improved safety by ensuring clear pathways and improved lighting as well as extending the existing CCTV network to within the underpass and northern park area.

The completion of this project marks the final stage of the Waitemata Local Board’s redevelopment plans for Myers Park.



Hinaki in Graham Tipene’s Waimahara artwork photo credit: David St George



Myers Park photo credit: David St George



## Te Hā Noa – Victoria Street

Te Hā Noa, a renewed Victoria Street, is an important step for delivery of the City Centre Masterplan. Victoria Street will become a tree-lined walking street with one lane of traffic in each direction, a bidirectional cycleway, prominent Māori art and design, and 20 new large native trees.

Since construction started in April 2023, it continues to progress alongside the City Rail Link streetscapes. The northern section of Victoria Street between Albert Street and Queen Street was completed and opened to the public in March 2024. The Victoria-Albert Street intersection was re-opened in December 2023 after being closed since 2021 for City Rail Link construction. Construction continues on the southern side as well as on the section of Victoria Street between High Street and Kitchener Street.

**For more information:** [www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/TeHaNoa](http://www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/TeHaNoa)



One of 11 native trees been lifted into place Te Ha Noa/Victoria Street.

## High Street improvements

The High Street Improvements project is an important part of the expanded laneway network envisaged in the City Centre Masterplan, that prioritises pedestrians, creates a safe and pleasant environment for strolling, gathering and public life. It will also ensure local delivery access to support businesses and residents.

Engagement is underway and will continue to the end of October 2024, with businesses, residents, property owners in the High Street area and the wider public to understand their ambitions, expectations and priorities for High Street. The community insights gathered, alongside technical investigations, will inform the development of options for the future of High Street. We will consult on the options from early to mid-2025.

**For more information:** [www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/highstreet](http://www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/highstreet)



High Street engagement



# Development response

As part of the Midtown Regeneration Programme, the CCTR has enabled a development response approach designed to support business and residents impacted by construction. There is a strong focus on maintaining a positive customer experience, managing construction disruption, safety, street health and cleanliness.

**In 2023/2024, initiatives supported by the CCTR to reduce the impacts of construction have included:**

- updated customer experience standards and consistent disruption mitigation expectations for construction contractors
- improved wayfinding and universal accessibility standards to help make it easy to get around
- a targeted focus on on-street customer experience, safety, security and antisocial behaviour, including a grant to Heart of the City to enable regular security patrols in midtown
- activations and promotion to attract people to the area during construction
- specific place-based guidance for encouraging outdoor dining in completed spaces, along with support for businesses to add new outdoor dining in midtown.



Mural at 25 Victoria Street by Margarita Vovna. Photo credit: Dan Bali



## Midtown Small Business Support Programme

The council manages a programme to support small businesses, including a dedicated business connector, on-street liaison, and support for outdoor dining as new spaces come online, and microgrants of up to \$3000 per business per year.

### 2023/2024 highlights



FREE business connector service worked with over

**60**  
businesses

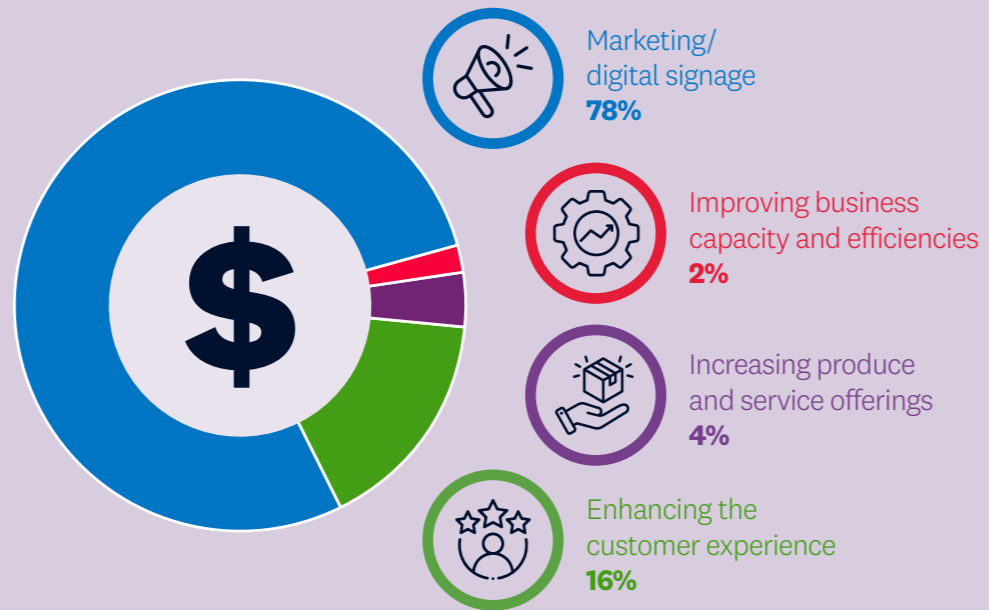


Microgrants of up to \$3000 each to more than



**50**  
businesses

### How businesses used the microgrants in 2023/2024:



### Example: Midtown street parties

Activations like the midtown street parties supported businesses to reach new audiences.

“We mainly attract business staff in the day, but we saw a significant increase in the number of families. It was fantastic to see a new customer base that we have been actively trying to target.”

— Business owner.



Masifinya's Fashion at the November 2023 Midtown Street Party, Elliott Street. Photo Nik Brinkman



# City centre place improvements

## Wai Horotiu Queen Street

The final phase of the Wai Horotiu Queen Street upgrades, from Shortland Street to Customs Street, was successfully completed in November 2023, delivering a seamless connection between Aotea Square and Te Komitanga for pedestrians, cyclists and scooter riders.

This project has delivered a people-friendly, green and spacious street that is safer for pedestrians. Over 200 planters filled with native foliage are dotted throughout, bringing more nature and colour to the street. Spaces for eating lunch or having a mid-shop breather have been carved out along the street with well-designed seating.

**For more information:** [www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/WaiHorotiu](http://www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/WaiHorotiu)



## Victoria Quarter programme

Victoria Quarter (Te kōturi i te uru – West Stitch) is one of the eight areas outlined in the City Centre Masterplan. The Victoria Quarter is home to more than 10,000 residents, making it the densest residential neighbourhood in New Zealand. The City Centre Masterplan vision for this area is for a vibrant and desirable residential neighbourhood, that is safe and well connected to the city centre.

Planning is underway to investigate improvements to pedestrian accessibility, safety, attractiveness and amenity in the residential community, as well as around Victoria Park.

## Emily Place improvements

The Emily Place improvements project aims to transform Emily Place and the adjacent reserve into a pedestrian-friendly area, enhancing pedestrian movement, community access, and placemaking from Customs Street in the north to Shortland Street and Eden Crescent in the south.

Public consultation ran from August to October 2023, gathering feedback on a draft concept plan from local residents, workers, and visitors. This feedback helped the development of an updated concept plan. Preliminary design will commence in late-2024 with the final design completed in 2025.

**For more information:** [www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/emilyplace](http://www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/emilyplace)



## Karanga-a-Hape Station neighbourhood improvements

Auckland Transport will deliver enhancements to pedestrian safety and accessibility, improve cycling connections, and streamline bus and train transfers in the neighbourhood, with a focus around the new City Rail Link Karanga-a-Hape Station entrances. The works include upgrades to Mercury Lane and Pitt Street, and minor works on Cross Street, Canada Street and East Street. Construction started in July 2024.

The CCTR is contributing towards the permanent public realm uplift for the project, including new street trees and garden beds, high quality pavement, street furniture and lighting.

The CCTR is also funding a new set of public toilets at Mercury Lane, that will cater to the high number of patrons who use the vibrant 24/7 Karangahape Road area.

**For more information:** [www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/karangahapeprecinct](http://www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/karangahapeprecinct)





### Nelson Street Laneway

Once complete, Nelson Street Laneway will be more welcoming and safer for pedestrians with wider footpaths, better paving, more loading zones, greenery, and improved lighting.

The project team completed a 12-week engagement process on the draft preliminary design between September and November 2023, collecting 565 pieces of feedback. Overall, positive sentiment was expressed on the planned improvements, lighting enhancements and more attractive design for the area. The detailed design will be completed in late-2024 with construction planned to commence in 2025.

**For more information:** [www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/nelsonstreet](http://www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/nelsonstreet)

### Mills Lane and Swanson Street improvements

The Mills Lane and Swanson Street Improvements Project aims to make the two laneways safer and easier for people to move through as well as provide more space for loading and servicing activities.

A draft preliminary design was developed in March 2024 with public consultation on the project undertaken in May/June 2024. The design will be further developed based on community feedback and technical inputs in the second half of 2024, with construction planned to commence in 2025.

**For more information:** [www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/swansonandmills](http://www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/swansonandmills)

### Tyler Street upgrade and Waitematā Plaza

The Tyler Street upgrade, between Te Komititanga and Commerce Street, forms the final phase of creating high-quality pedestrian-focused spaces around Waitematā Station to align with the completion of City Rail Link. Once complete, Tyler Street will enhance the pedestrian connection between Te Komititanga and the Britomart precinct, complementing the existing network of public and shared spaces in the Britomart precinct.

Design works have been completed with construction commencing in July 2024, and completion scheduled in late-2025.

**For more information:** [www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/tylerstreet](http://www.ProgressAKL.co.nz/tylerstreet)



Artist's impression of Tyler Street



# Looking ahead

## The City Centre Advisory Panel has identified six areas of focus in the city centre for the council group:

- improve community and visitor safety, recognising that current safety issues (e.g. anti-social behaviour and crime incidents) are a barrier to attracting people back to the city centre
- enhance the vibrancy and overall experience of the city centre
- grow a thriving residential population with an aspirational growth target
- develop the potential of the city centre as one of Asia Pacific's premier learning and innovation hubs
- maximise access into and around the city centre through integrated transport networks, capitalising on the City Rail Link, completing the wider rapid transit network, and the planned cycleway network, expanding connectivity, travel choice and resilience
- increase climate resilience, particularly through emissions reduction initiatives and adaptation measures (contained within Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan).

These priorities are aligned with City Centre Action Plan which set out the council group's priorities and programmes across the city centre to work towards achieving the vision of the City Centre Action Plan (2023).

The CCTR investment portfolio for financial years 2023-2031 has been updated to align with the panel's priorities and City Centre Action Plan. It includes increased budgets for the Midtown Programme and for activation, placemaking, visitor attraction and city centre promotion. Additional budget is allocated to supporting residential communities and safety improvements.



Lunar New Year 2024





Delivered by City Centre Programmes, Auckland Council,  
October 2024

Contact: [citycentre@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:citycentre@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

Image on front cover: Myers Park

**AUCKLAND'S FUTURE IN PROGRESS**

