Tauranga is New Zealand’s fifth-largest city and growing fast. In the last 30 years, Tauranga’s population has grown by more than 70,000. Currently, 135,000 people call Tauranga home. Our city is projected to grow to almost 200,000 people by 2063.

This level of growth means Tauranga City is also experiencing accelerated development of its city centre, which is currently undergoing significant transformation.

The transformation of the city centre is creating a city ‘fit for the future’, with the infrastructure to function as the commercial, civic and cultural heart of the region.

To achieve the vision of “a more vibrant, safe and successful city centre” there are currently a large number of exciting developments and/or projects being undertaken in the city centre.

These developments bring both opportunities and challenges such as:

- more spaces available for activation of city events
- increased numbers of contractors/workers in the city centre
- temporary loss of car parking
- significant access issues – whether by car, bus, cycle or foot
- increased noise and movement of heavy machinery
- a perception that the city is ‘closed for business’.
Where the Response Plan fits in…

The city centre transformation is supported by the Heart of the City Programme.

The Heart of the City programme is a deliverable of the City Centre Strategy (2012) which is guiding major change to public spaces, access, land use and built form in Tauranga’s city centre over the next 25 to 30 years.

The City Centre Strategy aims to strengthen the role of the city centre as the key commercial and cultural focus of the sub-region. A major focus is to see ‘more people, more often, staying longer’ in the city centre. It is a long-term plan that details ideas and actions that can be undertaken progressively by Tauranga City Council (TCC) and other organisations and stakeholders.

Successful actions already realised as a result of the City Centre Strategy include clarification of city centre precincts, progress on the redevelopment of the waterfront, University of Waikato and Toi Ohomai developments, activation of “Our Place”, plans for a new civic centre and library development, and the establishment of regular events.

Current activities in the city centre include the Durham St and Durham Lane upgrade, Aspen Reserve redevelopment, water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades, Harrington St car park, Farmers’ building redevelopment, new apartment blocks, and increased accessibility via improvement to cycle-ways and pedestrian routes. Further plans to upgrade Wharf Street and Elizabeth Street are also well advanced.

The Heart of the City Programme aligns with Council’s community outcomes: a talented and innovative city full of opportunity; a city with heart and soul; a city of great spaces, places and environments.
A shared approach

With the Heart of the City programme well underway, and a number of other organisations involved in the transformation of the city centre, Council has introduced the development of a Response Plan to work together with city centre partners and address the challenges ahead in a collaborative way.

Meetings were held with each of the following transformation partners to discuss what the Response Plan should address.

Transformation partners

- Business owners (including retailers)
- Developers/contractors
- Mainstreet/Downtown Tauranga
- Council staff
- City Centre Action Group

City Centre Action Group members

- Bay of Plenty Property Council
- BOP Tertiary Partnership
- Tauranga Chamber of Commerce
- Creative Bay of Plenty
- Downtown Tauranga
- Priority One
- Tauranga City Council
- Tauranga Art Gallery
Outcomes of consultation with transformation partners

A list of response areas were created as a result of the feedback received from transformation partners and their ideas about what needs to be addressed in the city centre.

A draft of the Response Plan and its proposed initiatives was then presented back to the transformation partners, and additional city centre stakeholders for feedback.

Other city centre stakeholders consulted

Bay of Plenty Regional Council
Disability Advisory Group
Emergency services
Iwi representative
Positive Ageing Advisory Forum
Youth Advisory Group
The People’s Project

This exercise enabled city transformation partners and city centre stakeholders to prioritise initiatives, as outlined in the Response Plan section of this document.

TCC and Mainstreet/Downtown Tauranga have been working closely to translate the response plan initiatives into a detailed Action Plan (see Appendix One). These two groups will lead the delivery and on-going adjustment of the actions, in collaboration with transformation partners.
Response Plan

Goal

The City Centre Response Plan minimises disruption throughout the transformation process – contributing to a safe, vibrant and successful city centre.
Objectives

- transformation partners are well-informed, collaborative and contributing to the city centre response
- workers, residents and visitors are aware of the impacts of the city centre transformation and participating in the response
- Tauranga city centre is inviting and easy to get around for everyone
- residents of Tauranga are aware that the city centre transformation is underway and what the benefits will be

Success will look like…

- partnering/relationships are strengthened between the council, transformation partners, and people in or visiting the city centre
- city centre businesses/retailers feel supported by the transformation partners and the Response Plan
- the city centre is vibrant, welcoming and safe to get around
- there are increased opportunities for people to come to the city centre

Measurements

City centre baseline data is currently being gathered in regard to:

- foot traffic
- consumer spend
- business, visitor and consumer perception

Targets for these metrics will be set by TCC and Mainstreet/Downtown Tauranga.

Principles

The principles underpinning our city centre response are to:

- work together
- be joined-up (not ad hoc)
- be open and responsive
- be innovative and flexible
- mitigate risk and uphold public and contractor safety
- report progress and celebrate success

It is acknowledged that the transformation process is something that everyone has a vested interest in and therefore working together is vital to the plan’s success. For the Response Plan to achieve its goal of minimising disruption and contributing to a safe, vibrant and successful city centre, transformation partners need to be involved and supportive of the response areas.

Four key response areas

A. Joined-up approach to the city’s development
B. Communication
C. Access (getting people to and around the city)
D. Activation (things that will bring people to the city)
A. Joined-up approach to the city’s development

Joining up all work streams and city centre major projects will enable a story to be developed about what is happening in the city centre, what to expect and when, and where it is headed.

Essential to this initiative is the creation of a high-level transformation map that will allow all contributors to see how the city will evolve, and where the opportunities and pinch points are. This will become the ‘one source of truth’.

The TCC Heart of the City team will lead the creation of the transformation map. The success of the map will depend on the involvement of all developers, contractors, TCC city centre project managers, and relevant TCC staff. The transformation map will be flexible and will change over time. The transformation map will include planned construction timeframes.

Note: the transformation plan is needed before actions B, C and D can effectively be implemented.
The following are all considered high priority initiatives:

1. A city centre transformation map (as above).

2. A city transformation ambassador service focussed on listening to and communicating with retailers, developers, contractors, residents, businesses [see actions under B].

3. Guidelines for the design of hoardings and advertisements that are consistent, positive and vibrant on developments in the city centre.

Of a lower priority, but still supporting a joined-up approach, are the following:

4. A portable 3D table top model representing a view of the city centre – something that has parts people can engage with [see action under B - 4]. This model, along with the video (see below), will be used for community engagement, ensuring the vision for the city centre transformation is widely communicated e.g. by being displayed in places such as shopping centres, schools, retirement villages, churches.

5. An engaging video fly-through that envisages the ‘finished’ city centre. A more sophisticated version would be representative of the transformation map showing progress in stages.

6. Information hubs that enable people to review and/or view the transformation map which will be established at key points in the city centre.
The communication initiatives fall into two categories:

- Internal (dialogue between all city centre transformation partners)
- External (outward facing communication that shares information about the city centre and builds optimism)

**Internal**

The ‘internal group’ includes all transformation partners and their wider teams.

The first step in this process will be to invite them all to be part of the internal group – noting the unique status this gives them as contributors to the transformation process.

Communication within this group will need to be:

- timely
- responsive
- accessible to all
- based on one source of truth (the transformation map).
The following are all considered high priority initiatives:

1. **A central portal for communication between partners.**

   The use of an online/mobile app group is proposed as a way to enable free messaging across the internal group. Real time information and notifications will be provided on upcoming events, road closures, new signs going up, progress reports, points of interest, risks, construction schedules, meetings etc. It provides partners the opportunity and responsibility to be fully informed and to share stories, concerns, issues and have questions responded to promptly. For those people who have a customer interface (businesses, retailers) they will be able to respond to customer queries in a more knowledgeable and helpful way.

   A more formal database of everyone who is a transformation partner will also be established. This will ensure other forms of communication (newsletters, meetings, letters) can be ongoing.

2. **The city transformation ambassador service (see A)** will be focussed on listening to and communicating between retailers, developers, contractors, businesses. In the establishment phase of the ‘internal’ communication network, this service will be helping transformation partners to adopt the social media app which will ensure they make their way around all stakeholder groups at the outset.

3. **A City Centre Response Group** will also be established. This will include representatives from each of the transformation partners. They will meet regularly to monitor progress of this Response Plan.

4. Transformation partners will be invited to develop an awards programme that will reward exceptional behaviours in 2019.
**External**

External communication will align to the Heart of the City communications strategy to focus on public information, creating enthusiasm and vibrancy, and promotion of city centre activities.

The Response Plan however requires additional external communication tactics to sustain/increase numbers in the city centre and to build enthusiasm as progress is made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority tactics are as follows.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Creation of a web portal to host all the city centre information – a one stop shop. This supports the joined-up response above</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. A dedicated marketing campaign including radio, print and digital advertising that focuses on the big picture and key messaging: (using the Heart of the City branding). This is in addition to business-as-usual advertising for city centre activations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A public information plan that identifies opportunities such as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• developers and other stakeholders sharing their vision for the city centre via speaking engagements e.g. Project Tauranga, service clubs, sports clubs etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• targeted print and social media stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>• displays in public spaces such as shopping malls, in empty shops, and via community events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Focused monitoring and engagement on existing social media channels when questions are asked, or issues are raised</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional tactics, which will be undertaken as required are as follows.

5. City centre champions – people who are not necessarily in the city centre but who are influential in other areas of the city such as sports clubs, service clubs, churches, education facilities etc. These people will be important to spread the message far and wide that the city centre is open and well worth a visit. They need to be treated to special events and kept informed.

6. Ensuring all city centre residents are communicated with regularly and have access to up to date information (noting that contractors already contact tenants of buildings impacted by developments).

7. Community Advisory Panel (Positive Ageing Advisory Forum, Disability Advisory Group, Youth Advisory Group, City Centre Safety Group) to provide feedback and contribute ideas (they will also act as city centre ambassadors within their own networks) via meeting every two months.

8. Investment in articles targeting national publications, to tell the story of the city centre transformation e.g. National Radio, Sunday papers and magazines. This investment will require commissioning the articles and purchase of editorial space.
C. Access (getting people to and around the city)

Transportation, parking and being pedestrian-friendly are the key elements to this response.

Initiatives that will respond to the need to provide greater and easier access are mainly around signage, provision of improved public transport options, enhancement of walkways and providing visitors, workers and residents with improved real time information.
## Priority initiatives for access are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Slow down city centre traffic to 30kms an hour – keeping the signage bold, simple and consistent to reduce confusion, and increase safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Investigate initiatives to free up parking supply and increase public transport patronage in collaboration with Bay of Plenty Regional Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Support Staff Travel Plans for large employers and working with developers and contractors who will be on site all day to encourage parking on the outskirts of the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>As part of the transformation map, develop a city centre traffic map to be displayed through a range of channels (providing some direction on how to get around and where to find parking).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Review and improve signage – making it consistent, clear, positive and vibrant – particularly city centre directional signage.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Additional initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Advocate for pedestrian friendly city and provide improved wayfinding signage that supports this (link to other city signage/billboards – take a joined-up approach).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ensure safety around construction sites including minimising hazards for people with mobility issues. Align with the actions in TCC’s city safety plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Promotion of pedestrian routes that highlight other parts of the city centre such as a cultural trail or historical tour – or create a ‘development’ trail that people can walk and view all construction sites to see what is happening.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is about keeping the city centre vibrant and attractive with new events and activities that improve people’s experience of the city centre. The purpose of activation is to support existing businesses and retail and generate both awareness and excitement about the City’s transformation.

Activation requires proactive and sustained collaboration between all transformation partners. Engaging with Project Tauranga partners will also be considered.

As activation is about the experience people have or want in the city centre, it will be important for citizens to be involved in deciding that they would like to see. This will involve enhanced two-way communication, and the willingness to respond positively to a range of not-always-orthodox ideas.

Activation is linked to the high-level transformation map. Having a joined-up approach is critical for the programme’s success. The existing event calendars will be used to highlight events and activities 6-12 months in advance with different agencies taking turns to lead the delivery.
**Priority initiatives are as follows.**

1. Encourage transformation partners and city centre stakeholders to use existing event calendars to promote events.

2. People connecting with key projects. For example: hard hat barbeques with members of the public, ‘roof’ shouts (allowing people to go to the top of new buildings and view the project and the evolving city), site open days, creating viewing portholes on major construction sites with interpretative panels, targeted tours with school groups.

3. Event funding from the TCC Event funding framework (can be applied for to support events that meet criteria linked to city centre transformation and “a vibrant city centre”)

4. Celebrations of key project milestones

5. Set up and manage pop-up active sites

Transformation partners are encouraged get behind any planned events in the city centre where possible.

The key to the success of activation is (a) connection to a transformation map (b) marketing (c) enabling people to get to it (not just city centre folk but new customers and visitors).
Monitoring and review

TCC will facilitate a bi-monthly meeting with the City Centre Response Group (see ‘Communication – internal’ section) to:

- review progress against each of the initiatives outlined above
- assess the relevance of outstanding initiatives, and add to, amend and delete initiatives as required
- re-prioritise initiatives as appropriate.

Measuring progress against the success factors and measurement targets for this plan will be through:

1. Face to face interviews with transformation partners
2. Technical measurement of foot traffic and consumer spend
3. Surveying the perceptions of business owners and visitors/consumers.

Contact points

For more information about the City Centre Response Plan, please contact the Heart of the City team – hoc@tauranga.govt.nz
TCC and Mainstreet/Downtown Tauranga have been working closely to translate the response plan initiatives into a detailed action plan. These two organisations will lead the delivery and on-going adjustment of the actions, in collaboration with transformation partners. The Tauranga City Centre Action Plan can be accessed on our website.