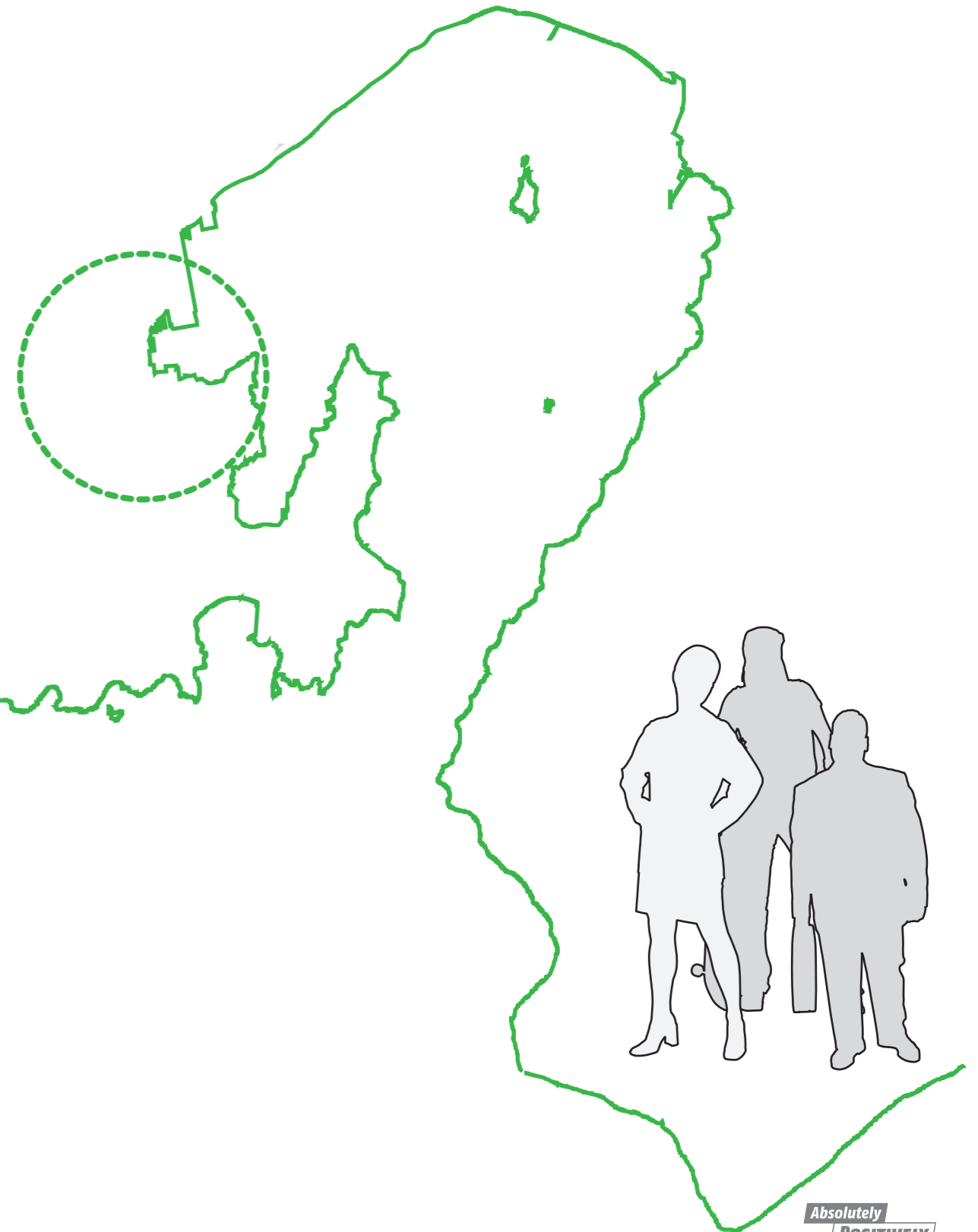


Central City Framework

DRAFT - Approach to Implementation

November 2011



Introduction

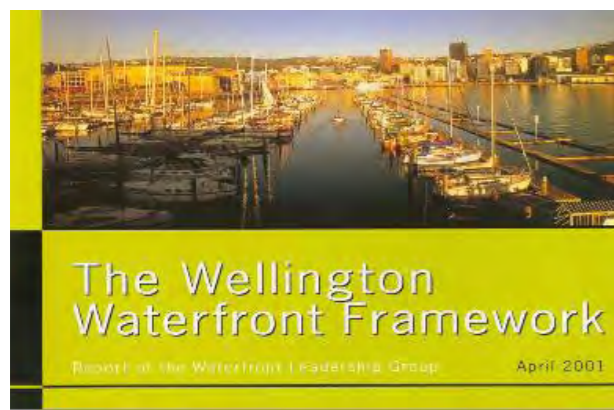
Wellington’s central city is its economic engine and cultural heart. It is compact, lively and full of character; a centre of government and business and creativity; a place to live – to think, learn, grow, work, shop, relax and be entertained.

But, as the population grows, people’s ways of living and working change, environmental and resource pressures intensify, and Wellington increasingly faces competition from other cities for people and investment, the central city will face challenges.

This Central City Framework explains how we can respond to some of those challenges. It does not propose to change the central city’s existing character and strengths. Rather, it seeks to enhance and build on those strengths, while making practical improvements so that future Wellingtonians will enjoy a city that is even more friendly, prosperous, sustainable and dynamic.

In short, it outlines a framework for implementing city improvements in both the public and private realms, as we move towards the bicentennial in 2040 and its vision as a smart capital.

Why do this	What is this	How will it be achieved
- growth needs planning	- a comprehensive plan	- leadership
- emissions can be reduced	- built on the city’s strengths	- commitment
- retail can be more viable	- short and long term projects to sustain a dynamic central city.	- design
- moving around can be easier		- construction
- costs can be reduced		- investment
- experiences can be enhanced		- collaboration.
- it will be expected.		



Agreed guiding framework for the development of the waterfront

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



Existing work	Supporting work	Future work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Urban Development strategy - Public Space Policy - District Plan (central area) - Plan Change 48: Central Area Review - Waterfront Framework - City to Waterfront : Public Spaces and Public Life Study - Built Heritage Policy - Climate Change Action Plan - Transport Strategy - Parking Policy - Walking Policy - Cycling Policy - Bus Prioritisation plan - Capital City Initiative - Development Contributions Policy - Arts Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital - Spatial Structure Plan - Space Syntax movement analysis - The Wellington Waterfront Framework - Draft Economic Development Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiate catalyst projects - Develop precinct plans - Complete project specific designs - Design concepts for long term projects - Complete Public Space Design Manual - Set terms of reference for an urban design panel - Explore funding mechanisms - Integration into the District Plan - implement transport improvement projects

Figure 1. Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital sets the overall strategy for Wellington. The Central City Framework describes how we could implement the recommendations from overseas consultants, local experts and the general public. The next steps will be to gather further information on the projects suggested to formulate a long term work programme.

Contents

Introduction	3
1.0 Current Strengths, Future Challenges	7
1.1 The central city now	8
1.2 Future trends and challenges	10
1.3 The way forward	10
2.0 Objectives for the Central City	11
3.0 Making it happen	15
4.0 Projects	17
4.1 Streets	19
4.1.1 North-South boulevards	20
4.1.2 East-West Connectors	21
4.1.3 Laneways	22
4.1.4 Irregular Streets	23
4.2 Built structure	24
4.2.1 Building Quality	25
4.2.2 Built Heritage	26
4.2.3 Case Study Sites	27
4.3 Open Spaces	29
4.3.1 Triangular Spaces	30
4.3.2 Green Walls and Roofs	31
4.3.3 Stream streets	32
4.3.4 Landscape (focus areas)	33
4.4 Precincts	35
4.4.1 Parliamentary precinct	36
4.4.2 Memorial precinct (south Te Aro)	37
4.4.3 East Te Aro	38
4.4.4 Southern Victoria/Cuba Precinct	39
4.4.5 Waterfront connections	40
4.4.6 Pipitea precinct	40
4.5 Systems infrastructure	41
4.5.1 Green Infrastructure	42
4.5.2 Movement	43
4.5.3 Climate	44
5.0 Principles for prioritisation	45
6.0 Measures of success	47

1

Current Strengths, Future Challenges

1.0 Current Strengths, Future Challenges

This framework aims to protect and enhance all that Wellingtonians love about the central city, while also making improvements where they are needed in response to current and future challenges

1.1 The central city now

The success of any city is a product of history, geography, economics, architecture, planning – and, above all, people.

A great city has a distinct character and culture – an identity that inspires passion in those who live there and envy in those who do not. It is a destination – it draws people in, to work, shop, play, learn, and enjoy themselves. It has variety – it can meet a wide range of interests and tastes. It is easy to get into and get around. And it is intimate – it is built on a human scale, and so encourages the random encounters between people that spark friendship, creativity, and – increasingly – economic success.

There is much to admire in Wellington’s central city. Though Wellington is not a large city, it is New Zealand’s most ‘urban’ in character. This is reflected in its high population density, compact urban form, creative and cosmopolitan atmosphere, variety of experiences on offer, and dynamic, ever-changing population.

Key features of Wellington’s central city include:

- **Compactness** – The harbour and hills confine the central city within a fairly small footprint. Unlike most central cities, Wellington is small enough that it’s easy to walk from one end to the other. This compactness, and the relationship between the city and the natural features that surround it, contribute to Wellington’s unique character, making it an urban village with a wild edge.
- **A wide range of uses** – Decades ago, the central city was dominated by government and corporate offices, with some light industry in Te Aro. It was quiet in evenings and weekends. Now, the central city is a vibrant area supporting a wide range of business, cultural, entertainment/hospitality, and recreational uses. Increasingly, it has become a place to live as well as work – the number of inner city residents grew by almost 50% in the years 2001-2006.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Distinctive shops** – A large number of independent retailers gives the city varied shopping experience, from the Golden Mile to the bohemian shops and cafes of the Cuba quarter. This gives the city a point of distinction when compared with the chain stores and shopping malls that increasingly dominate smaller centres.
- **The heart of the cultural capital** – The central city has many of New Zealand’s foremost cultural institutions and events, from Te Papa and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra to the NZ International Arts Festival, the World of WearableArt, and more. It is also home to many creative sector businesses. Wellington’s creativity and heritage are reflected in its urban environment, for example through its growing range of public art. These central city features are the basis of Wellington’s status as New Zealand’s cultural capital.
- **Café culture** – Wellington’s intimate street layout and the cosmopolitan tastes of its people are reflected in the city’s famous café culture. The cafes, bars and restaurants that line the city’s streets provide informal meeting places and help to make the central city a magnet for Wellington residents’ social as well as working lives.
- **Quirky and intimate** – Wellington’s geography has contributed to a ‘fine grained’ street layout, with many smaller streets and lanes. Though main streets largely run north-south, that pattern is broken by the quays which follow the natural shape of the harbour. Together, these features give the city an intimate and quirky feel, particularly in the Lambton and Cuba precincts. That quirkiness is also reflected in the city’s mix of building styles and public art. This street layout is important for the vibrancy of the central city: urban planners believe that short blocks encourage people to take a variety of walking routes and so support a wide range of independent shops, cafes etc.
- **People** – The strengths of Wellington’s central city reflect the tastes of the people who spend time there. On average, Wellingtonians are younger, more mobile, better educated, less car-oriented, and more affluent than the average New Zealander. This is particularly true for residents of the central city and inner suburbs. While

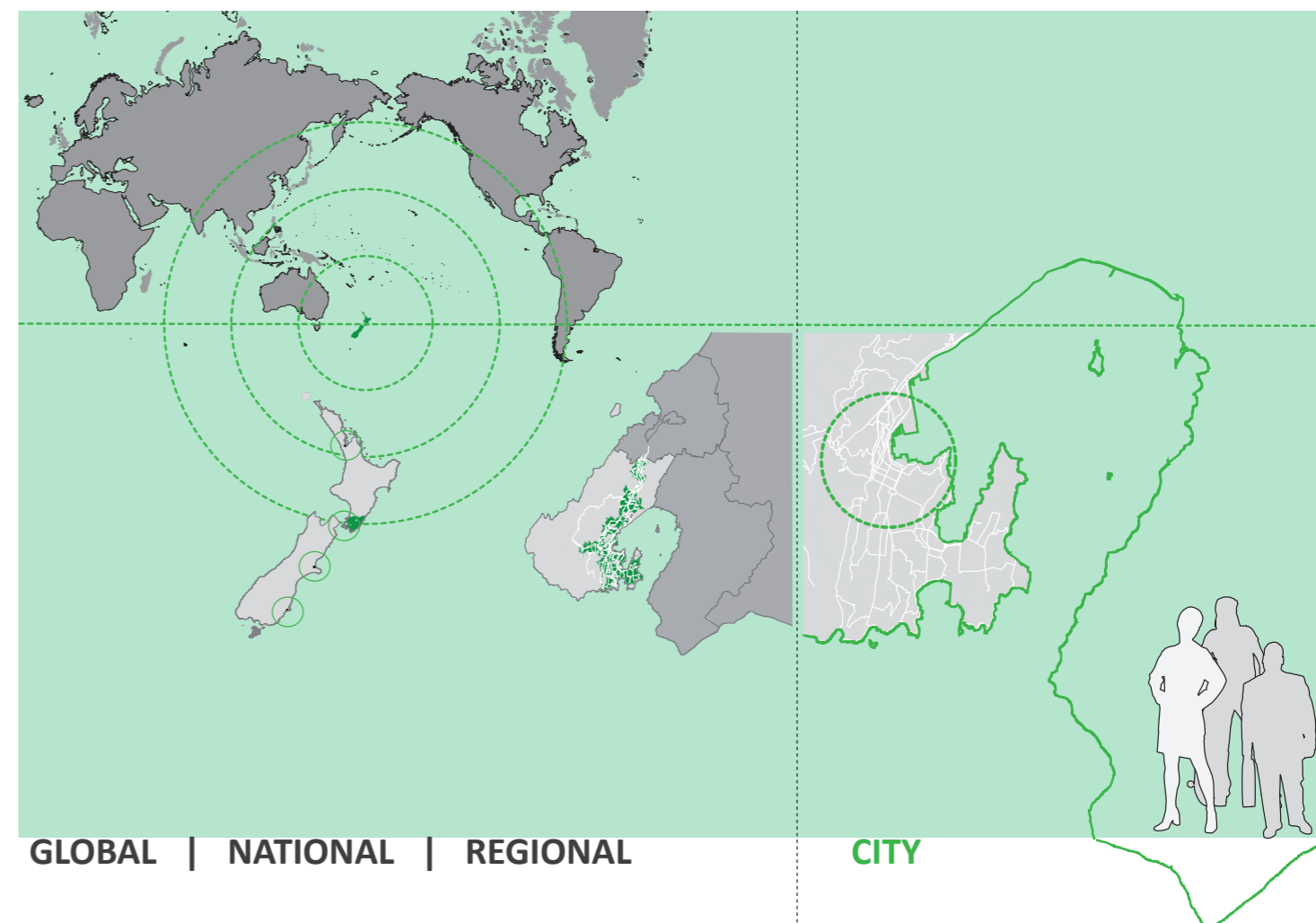


Figure 2. Wellington’s relationship from a global to a local scale has been an important consideration within this framework.

Facts for 2040:

200 years since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi
175 years since the city became the nation's capital
55 thousand more people living here (Statistics NZ medium series population projections)
68 percent of all Wellington City jobs are in the central city (Statistics NZ medium series population projections)

the geography and built environment support their aspirations, it is the central city's dynamic population who give Wellington its creativity and its cosmopolitan atmosphere.

- **Population density** – Wellington city's compactness contributes to high population density, both for resident and working populations. High population density helps to keep the city lively, both during working hours and in the evenings. It also means there are enough people to support variety in shopping, entertainment, recreation and other experiences the central city offers. With more than half of the region's GDP coming out of the 2.1 km² that make up the central city its also a vital part of the economy.
- **Capital city status** – Wellington's status as capital city is vital to the city's identity and ongoing success. Events ranging from protests at Parliament to Anzac Day commemorations contribute to urban vitality and sense of place. Capital city status attracts businesses (both corporate and creative) and allows the city to sustain its population of highly educated professionals. Capital city status also attracts media attention, and fosters international connections that make the city much more cosmopolitan than a city of its size would otherwise be.

All of these features together give Wellington its unique character and identity – allowing it to be at once intimate, cosmopolitan, quirky, wild, human, and creative.

However, in some respects the central city is not as strong as it could be. For example:

- **Vibrancy:** Some parts of the central city, such as Te Aro, have less intimate street layout, and so shops, cafes etc tend to concentrate along main streets, leaving other areas less vital and vibrant.
- **Public Space:** In some parts of the central city – such as Tory Street – there has been rapid residential development, and retail and hospitality businesses have started to follow, but development of public spaces and amenities has not kept up. Though inner city parks are important, other changes such as wider pavements, improved street furniture, street trees and traffic calming measures can all make an area more people-friendly.
- **Building quality:** Some central city buildings are of high quality and enhance people's experience of the city; others do not.
- **Legibility:** 'Sight lines' are often poor and unclear 'way finding' between the city and key destinations reduces peoples' choices. People can be a block or two from the waterfront but not be able to see or have sense of the harbour.
- **Heritage:** Though progress has been made, more could be done to acknowledge and celebrate Wellington's unique history, including its status as capital city – the built environment could more effectively tell Wellington's story.

1.2 Future trends and challenges

In the next 20-30 years, all cities are going to face challenges that reflect both global and local trends. For Wellington, key challenges will include:

- **Competition** – As technology changes and people become more mobile, cities are increasingly competing for skills, investment, and business. Smaller cities such as Wellington will increasingly be competing with larger ones such as Sydney and Shanghai. To be competitive, we will have to be distinct. We will have to know our strengths, and offer not only opportunity but also outstanding quality of life. A dynamic central city will be important for the city's competitiveness.
- **Environmental and resource challenges** – Larger populations, declining resources and the changing climate will require changes in the ways cities operate. Resource use will have to become more efficient, and volumes of pollution and emissions will have to fall. This will require more efficient transport, and may lead to people living closer to work and other services such as shops. With transport modes competing for limited space, some tough decisions will have to be made about the allocation of space between private vehicles, more sustainable modes such as walking and cycling, and more efficient modes such as public transport.
- **Changing nature of business** – Whereas an inner city address was once vital for businesses, new technology now means that many businesses can locate anywhere and serve customers around the globe. The plan aims to provide precincts that will develop over time providing businesses the choice of appropriate locations. This might see larger businesses. This might see smaller creative businesses that rely on personal contact clustering in Te Aro.
- **Changing nature of retail** – Small, independent retailers provide central Wellington with a crucial point of difference from suburban malls and shopping centres dominated by chain stores. Yet these smaller stores are facing increasingly fierce competition, both from chain stores and online outlets. If these smaller stores cannot survive, a vital element of Wellington's inner city character will be lost. We must ensure the city is developed in a way that opportunities for these stores are not lost.
- **Larger population and more demand for urban lifestyles** – Wellington's central city residential population is likely to grow by several thousand people in coming decades. Though some of these people will find homes in inner suburbs, most will live in CBD apartments and townhouses. Residential amenity will need to improve, and developers will most likely have to cater for a wider range of residents, from individuals looking for 'crash pads' to families choosing an inner city lifestyle. The city centre will need to provide services and recreation opportunities for children and the elderly.
- **Threats to character** – The city currently has a wide range of building types and ages – which means it can support a mix of residents (from young artists to wealthy professionals), shops (for example, from high-street fashion to new local designers) and other uses. But continuing apartment and high end retail development, along with the changing nature of retail, may change this 'mixed' character over time.
- **City as a campus** – The city is home to three universities. Each has a campus or schools either in the city or inner city suburbs. The influx of new students and academics brings vitality and a continuous sense of renewal to the city. It places demands on accommodation and housing choices.
- **Policy settings** – Legislation and regulatory processes have their genesis in the early 1990s. Ensuring they remain current and flexible in a changing will be critical.



Figure 3. This framework outlines the ways in which we can have a more dynamic central city.

1.3 The way forward

The Council has adopted *Wellington Toward 2040: Smart Capital*, a vision for the city's future. That vision explains the challenges Wellington will face over the next 30 years (some of which are explained above), and set out a pathway for the future based on Wellington becoming:

- a people centred city – that is, a city that is welcoming and friendly, provides opportunities for all, has strong neighbourhoods and communities, and embraces diversity and change
- a connected city – that is, a city with a smarter and stronger economy based on knowledge, skill and innovation
- an eco city – one that moves steadily towards a low-carbon future based on 'green' innovations that also provide an economic edge and support an outstanding quality of life.

For this vision to succeed, Wellington needs a dynamic central city. It needs a central city that is vibrant and creative, that continues to be the engine room of the regional economy and continues to offer a wide range of experiences – while also becoming greener and accommodating more people. In the following pages, this framework explains how.

2

Objectives for the Central City

2.0 Objectives for the Central City

These draft objectives will guide Council decisions and actions about the future of Wellington's central city. While the Council sets planning parameters and provides the urban environment, the achievement of these objectives will depend on the actions of many people and organisations, including property developers and landlords, businesses, central government, inner city residents and so on.

Create a prosperous central city

This will require the central city to retain and enhance its mix of residential, retail, hospitality, business, government, education and other uses. The central city will continue to rely on government, services, and creatives as the main driver of employment. It will be attractive and offer high amenity so that people choose to live here, retailers and hospitality businesses can prosper, and smaller creative businesses can choose to cluster there (perhaps in areas of renewal). It will offer a mix of building types and rents so that smaller, independent businesses can exist alongside larger corporate ones.

Accommodate growth and change

The central city will be adaptable, flexible and robust to accommodate growth and change in uses, lifestyles and population. This will require the Council to understand developers, and developers to understand community wants and needs. There will be flexibility in use of buildings, public spaces and infrastructure to accommodate changes in use. Buildings and infrastructure will be designed for energy and resource efficiency. More efficient approaches to transport, traffic management and parking will be supported.

Make our streets green

Wellington's streets will become greener and more attractive through a combination of planting, new and upgraded inner city parks, and initiatives such as 'stream streets' and urban wetlands. Some major routes will become tree-lined boulevards. Planting and development of urban wetlands will not only make the city more attractive but also provide ecological benefits such as improving stormwater filtration. The city's heritage can also be acknowledged through the development of 'stream streets', in which the sites of underground streams are acknowledged through landscaping and planting.

Build the city in response to the landscapes

Wellington is dominated by its natural landscape – its harbour and hills – in a way that very few other cities are. This landscape provides drama and interest, makes the city attractive, and shapes the city's growth. The city's special relationship with the water will continue to be protected and enhanced. Design and regulations will support building design that is more sensitive to this landscape – for example, by ensuring that building height and form are sensitive to ridgelines and other natural features, and that relevant view shafts along streets are protected and enhanced.

Create an eco inner city

The city will support sustainable transport choices, by encouraging people to walk, bike, skate, drive when needed or use public transport. Buildings will also reflect an eco-city ethos, meeting strong environmental standards and providing high levels of comfort for building users while minimising use of energy and water. Innovations such as solar energy, rainwater harvesting and green walls and roofs will be supported where practicable. Some areas of the city may be designated for leading-edge green development.

Ensure connections are easy to make

Whether you're walking, cycling, or driving, it should be easy to orient yourself in the city and find your way around. Wellington's streets, buildings and public spaces can be better integrated physically and visually into their surroundings. This will make it easier to find their way from place to place, and encourage a stronger sense of connection between different parts of the city.

Likewise, visual and physical connections between the city and the waterfront can be improved. So can connec-

Facts for now:

52 percent of the region's GDP is concentrated in the **2.1**sq km of the city centre (Statistics NZ medium series population projections)

Facts for 2040:

50 percent of the workforce will have grown up with Facebook or the next generation of communications (Statistics NZ medium series population projections)

68% the proportion of the region's growth that will occur in Wellington City

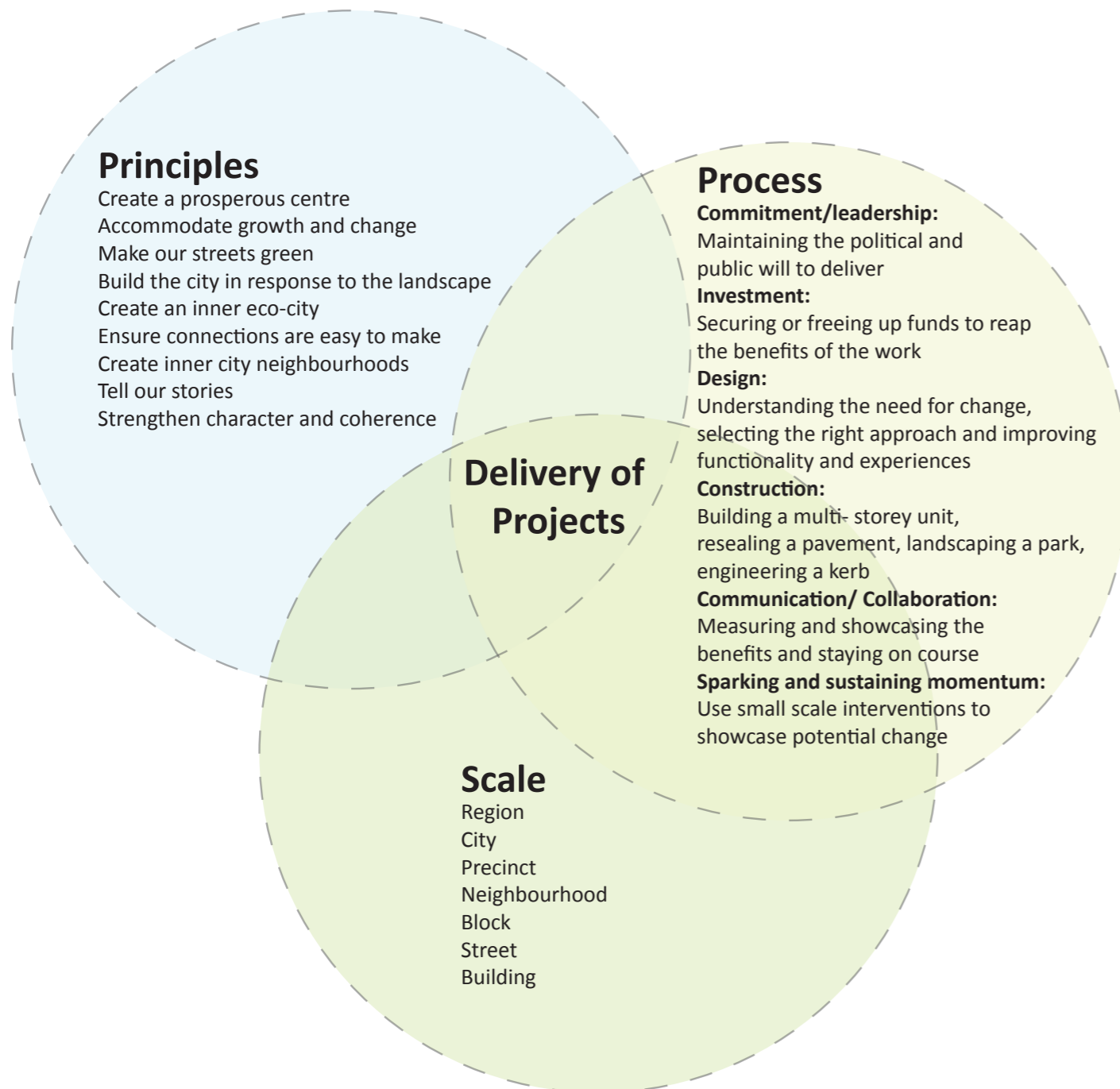


Figure 4. The design principles, the scale of project and the process will be key in the implementation of the Central City Framework

tions between the city centre and the Town Belt, and visual connections between related buildings such as the public institutions clustered around Parliament.

Create inner city neighbourhoods

Though Wellington’s central city is compact, it is also made up of a series of distinct precincts or neighbourhoods, each with its own character – from the Lambton quarter to Courtenay Place, Cuba Street and various parts of Te Aro. While some of these neighbourhoods are highly developed, others (such as those in Te Aro) are ripe for renewal and growth.

Each central city area will continue to be distinct, with its own character and unique mix of uses. In some retail or offices or hospitality businesses will be predominate while others will develop into inner city residential neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods will be safe, comfortable, varied and attractive. They will be vibrant and offer a range mix of places for people to get together. New developments will complement and enrich their surroundings.

Tell our stories

The central city will clearly reflect its own past and the identities of its people. Wellington’s capital city status will be reflected in its urban environment, particularly in the area around Parliament. It will celebrate tangata whenua and the diversity of its population in the design of its streets, buildings, parks and squares, signs and public artworks.

The city will also reflect the changes in its natural environment, for example through the stream streets referred to above. As we walk around the city, we should be aware of the history beneath our feet.

Strengthen character and coherence

Many parts of the central city have clearly defined built character, with most buildings conforming to a distinctive size, shape and relationship with the street. Cuba Street, for example, is characterised by low rise heritage buildings built close to and opening out onto the street. Similarly, the medium and high rise buildings of Lambton Quay and Willis Street – though of various ages and styles – have a direct relationship with the street and provide activity at ground level.

In contrast, some parts of the city have a mixture of building shapes, sizes and styles, with inconsistent street frontages. These can be successful and form a character of their own as in areas such as East Te Aro. More consistent approaches to buildings’ form and street relationships will enhance character and make the city more attractive and more walkable.

Proposed project workstreams have been recommended based on the objectives above. See table on the following page.

OBJECTIVES	Create a prosperous central city	Accommodate growth and change	Make our streets green	Build the city in response to the landscapes	Create an eco inner city	Ensure connections are easy to make	Create inner city neighbourhoods	Tell our stories	Strengthen character and coherence
PROJECTS									
STREETS									
North-South boulevards	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
East-West Connectors	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Laneways	●	●			●	●	●	●	
Irregular Streets	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
BUILT STRUCTURE									
Building Quality	●	●		●	●		●		●
Built Heritage	●	●		●				●	●
Case Study Sites		●		●			●		●
OPEN SPACES									
Triangular Spaces	●	●	●		●		●	●	●
Green Walls and Roofs	●	●	●		●		●	●	●
Stream streets	●		●	●	●	●		●	●
Landscape (precincts)	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	
PRECINCTS									
Parliamentary precinct	●		●		●	●		●	●
Memorial precinct	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
East Te Aro precinct	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Victoria/Cuba precinct		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Waterfront connections			●	●		●		●	●
Pipitea precinct	●	●		●		●	●		●
SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE									
Green Infrastructure		●	●	●	●			●	
Movement	●	●	●		●	●	●		●

Figure 5. The proposed projects have been assessed against the objectives.

3

Making it happen

3.0 Making it happen

Projects that aim to enhance the livability of towns and cities often start at the street, block, or building scale. All too often these are done in isolation from their surroundings and need to be readdressed.

This framework is developed in response to this point. It considers the future of Wellington's central city as a whole and aims to enhance and transform it through a number of smaller scale projects over time.

The aim is to renew the city in a sustainable way. Doing things once, economically and in a way that is flexible and resilient to changes.

At its simplest implementing the framework will involve:

- **commitment / leadership:** maintaining the political and public will to deliver
- **investment:** securing or freeing up funds to reap the benefits of the work
- **design:** understanding the need for change, selecting the right approach and improving functionality and experiences
- **sparking and sustaining momentum:** use small scale interventions to showcase potential change
- **construction:** building a multi-storey unit, resealing a pavement, landscaping a park, engineering a kerb
- **communication / collaboration:** measuring and showcasing the benefits and staying on course.

The overall implementation plan has been based on:

- a deliberate, phased approach to making changes
- realistic expectations with the inclusion of both short and longer term projects
- identifying catalyst projects that have low-risk with possibly high rewards
- stewardship / making sure that city improvements have been adequately planned, designed and tested
- initial funding being drawn from the reprioritisation of existing long term plan budgets related to upgrades in the central city
- consideration of new or additional funding mechanisms
- the identification, simplification and introduction of planning rules
- open dialogue.

The final point relates to the fact that the framework's success is dependent on the contribution of not only the Council but also the design, development and property communities, and institutions that are central to the city achieving its vision as a smart capital.



Storybox Key Facts:

What: Four interactive shipping containers to engage with Wellingtonians about the direction of their city

Where: Odlins Plaza and Te Aro Park

Who: 6000 locals and visitors to the city

When: 23rd June - 23rd July 2011