

# PRECINCTS

- **Create a prosperous central city**
- **Accommodate growth and change**
- **Ensure connections are easy to make**
- **Create inner-city neighbourhoods**
- **Strengthen character and coherence**
- **Build the city in response to the local setting**
- **Tell our stories**

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Though Wellington's central city is compact, it is also made up of a series of distinct precincts or neighbourhoods. Each has its own character – from the region's premier shopping high street to the entertainment district around Courtenay Place to the creativity of Cuba Street, as well as office parks and inner-city residential areas. Some of these neighbourhoods are relatively underdeveloped and ripe for renewal and growth.

As the number of people living within the central city grows, we want to ensure that we are also growing communities and neighbourhoods. This can be achieved by ensuring that developments provide not only places to live but also places for recreation, relaxation, and for people to get together.

A series of precinct plans will set out urban design objectives, built-form criteria, and

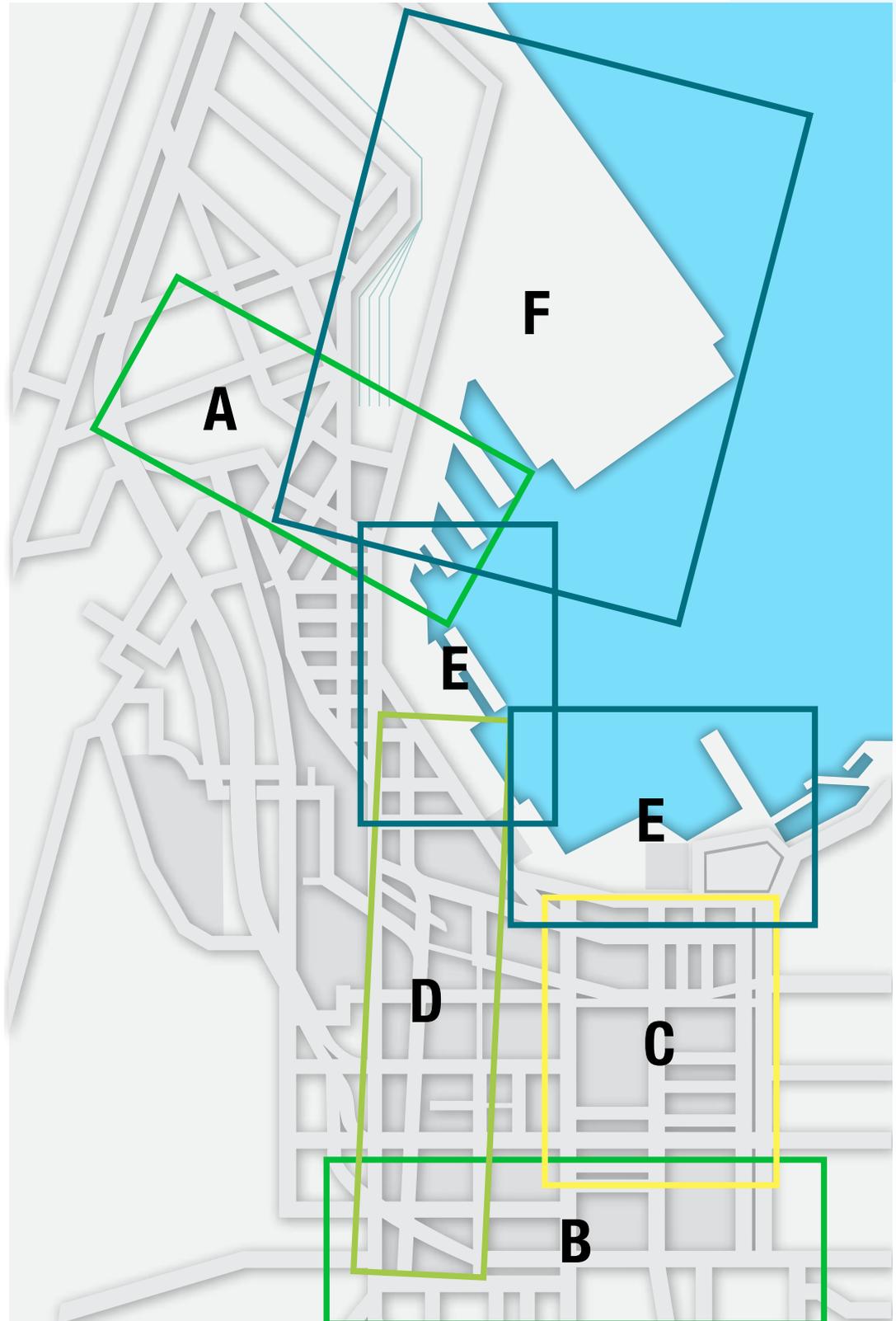
site guidelines that will integrate with other regulatory tools. These plans will provide a guide to developers who may want to invest in the neighbourhoods that are being developed.

The benefits of this work include:

- enhancing the urban character and heritage
- ambience of parts of the city, and the overall sense of place
- ensuring the right balance between built fabric and open space
- increased private amenity
- enhanced public amenity
- reduced environmental impacts of development
- increased community participation
- greater variety of business locations housing choice.

**LEGEND**

- A:** Parliamentary precinct
- B:** Memorial precinct
- C:** East Te Aro precinct
- D:** Victoria/Cuba precinct
- E:** Waterfront – Central precinct
- F:** Pipitea precinct



**Figure 29.**  
Precinct plans will build on the existing character of an area and define how it will look and function in the future.

# PARLIAMENTARY PRECINCT

As the name indicates, the Parliamentary precinct's primary function is government. It is home to Parliament, ministries, departments and foreign embassies. It's also home to the judiciary, Victoria University's Law School and cultural institutions such as the National Library and Archives New Zealand.

Though it is busy during the day, it is relatively quiet during evenings and weekends in spite of the presence of the Cathedral of St Paul and the addition of a number of apartment blocks in the last decade or so.

## **Current urban character**

The area has:

- a number of distinctive buildings – they currently act as objects rather than contributing to the overall surrounds
- a detached feel from the city – the current spatial design creates a sense of distance from the northern end of Lambton Quay and from the waterfront
- a number of 'fortress-style' buildings – the High Court, the Court of Appeal, National Library, Victoria University – that add to this sense of detached spaces.

## **Emerging or desired function**

This precinct's critical function is as a centre of government, and this will continue to be the case long into the future.

The precinct can, however, perform this function more effectively.

- The spaces between iconic buildings can be better designed, not only to improve connections between various parts of government but also to make the precinct more open and welcoming.
- The precinct can more effectively reflect New Zealand's status as one of the world's most open and long-standing democracies.
- Its built-form, signage and other aspects of urban design can share the story of New Zealand's democracy and so foster a sense of belonging and nationhood.
- A stronger identity and more openness will allow the precinct to more effectively cater for tourism, reflecting Wellington's capital city status.
- A wider variety of uses can be encouraged, so that the precinct is busy all week round, not just during working hours.
- Open spaces can connect the precinct to Te Ahumairangi Hill (Tinakori Hill) and the waterfront, which are geographically nearby but visually remote.
- A holistic approach can be taken to find solutions for reducing the effects of the wind
- As noted earlier, a processional route is to also be introduced from Parliament to the Memorial and beyond to Government House.



### Areas of opportunity

#### Parliamentary precinct plan

The project is to create a precinct plan to guide future development in the area. Works would likely include the development of civic space at Molesworth Street with Parliament as its western edge and the cathedral to its north; a stronger physical and visual harbour link; and a new entry and urban edge to Lambton Quay.

### Potential actions

- Identify further constraints and opportunities with stakeholders.
- Undertake comprehensive precinct plan.
- Create new works programme.
- Integrate with planning and design guidance along with other regulatory mechanisms.
- Work with the Historic Places Trust to ensure the 'historic area' maintains integrity.

#### Guiding principles of the precinct plan will be:

- openness
- national significance with informality
- a place of debate and learning
- heritage
- connection (a place of migration)
- a source of national pride.

**Figure 30.**  
The parliament precinct will deliver better places for people to spend time while ensuring built and social heritage is not lost.



# MEMORIAL PRECINCT (SOUTH TE ARO)

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This area has three main functions. It acts as a transition space between the central city and southern suburbs, provides traffic movement across the city, and is an educational area with Massey University's city campus, two high schools and a primary school in close proximity. It is also bordered by nationally significant buildings such as Government House and the National War Memorial, as well as the Basin Reserve.

The area lacks a defining characteristic. It is made up of large city blocks with a number of vacant sites. It is dominated by traffic, not people, and it is characterised by a general sense of dislocation.

## **Emerging or desired function**

The area has a number of characteristics that can be harnessed to make it a distinctive and desirable neighbourhood.

As an elevated area that is relatively open, it is well suited to an increase in residential living. The creation of a National War Memorial Park will provide a break-out area for students and local residents.

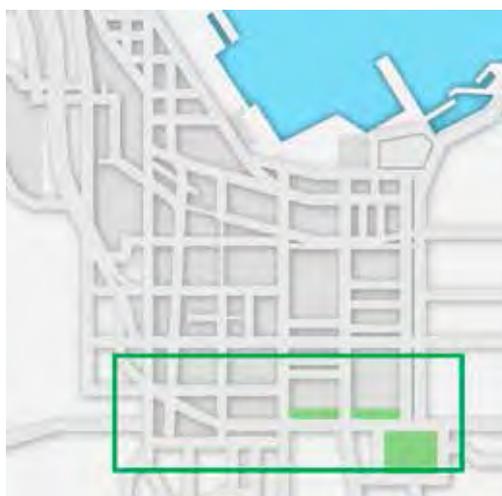
Its east-west vista provides clear links between the Town Belt and Kelburn. Its proximity to Adelaide Road – an identified area of

revitalisation – will complement its growth, meaning more people will walk and cycle through the area.

There is an opportunity for existing laneways and smaller East-West linking streets to be developed to provide improved spaces for pedestrians and support small businesses (see Laneways).

Guiding principles of the precinct plan will be:

- openness – connection to the hills
- a green edge to the central city
- location choices for small to medium business
- housing choice
- an inner-city neighbourhood (residential and mixed use)
- a place of reflection and learning.



### Areas of opportunity

#### South Te Aro/Memorial Precinct

The project is to create a precinct plan to guide future development in the area. Key aspects of the plan will be the creation of a National War Memorial Park, and steps to make more effective use of the small streets – providing easier movement and a sense of community.

### Potential actions

- Identify further constraints and opportunities with stakeholders.
- Undertake a comprehensive precinct plan.
- Create a new works programme.
- Integrate with planning and design guidance along with other regulatory mechanisms.

#### Guiding principles of the precinct plan will be:

- openness – connection to the hills
- a green edge to the central city
- location choices for small to medium business
- housing choice
- an inner-city neighbourhood (residential and mixed use)
- heritage
- a place of reflection and learning.

**Figure 31.**  
The integration of the memorial park and surrounding uses will form a green edge to the city that provides ease of connections to the southern inner-city suburbs. Image: Provided by Wraight Athfield



# EAST TE ARO PRECINCT

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This precinct covers the area between Taranaki Street and Kent/Cambridge terraces. The area has a variety of functions:

- inner-city living – over the last decade or so there has been rapid growth in the number of residential apartments
- ‘hidden’ bars, night spots and boutique stores
- destination shopping – such as large-format retail and car yards
- transit – Vivian Street and Kent and Cambridge terraces are main thoroughfares
- employment – small office blocks, some light manufacturing, and service outlets
- low-rise buildings, but with a mix of building ages and types.

The street grid is composed of regular North-South streets and regular but less continuous East-West streets. This means there are many intimate streetscapes, and that streets offer clear views towards both the harbour and the Town Belt.

Though the street blocks are fairly large, there are many public and private links crossing these blocks. They have potential for renewal to make them more accessible, vibrant and pedestrian friendly.

The mix of building types and ages gives the area an urban, gritty feel, while the

dominance of low-rise buildings means that it operates on a human scale.

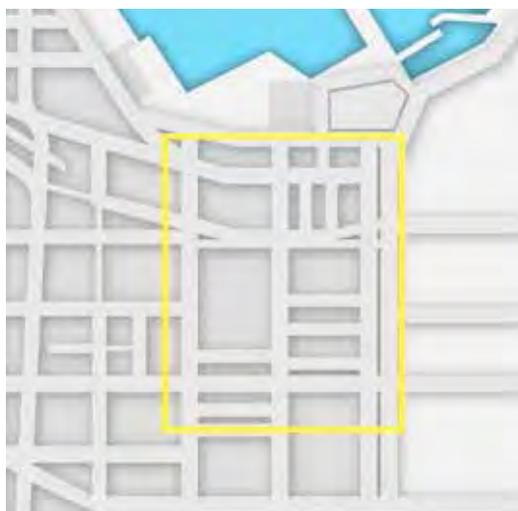
However, the area suffers from:

- discontinuous development – the area has sites that are empty or are used only for ground-level car parking
- limited space to congregate – the area has little greenery and very few open spaces where people can gather
- few opportunities to engage in city life – the area is dominated by cars – only a few areas are pedestrian friendly
- a broken street grid – this makes it difficult for people to navigate across town from east to west, and means that street blocks are not very coherent and provide little reason for people to explore them on foot.

## **Emerging or desired function**

East Te Aro has attracted a significant amount of residential/apartment development.

This can continue, but space also needs to be provided for small and medium sized business which will provide not only places of work but also more lively streets. As the area becomes more densely populated, it is crucial to sustain and extend the smaller east-west streets and laneways to provide walking routes and protect access to sunlight and views. With the commercial heart of the city concentrated



on the quays and terrace, Te Aro can develop as a mixed use inner-city neighbourhood – retaining some of its existing ‘gritty’ character while also developing more of an urban residential feel with sustainable buildings, greener streets, and more activity at street level.

### Areas of opportunity

#### East Te Aro

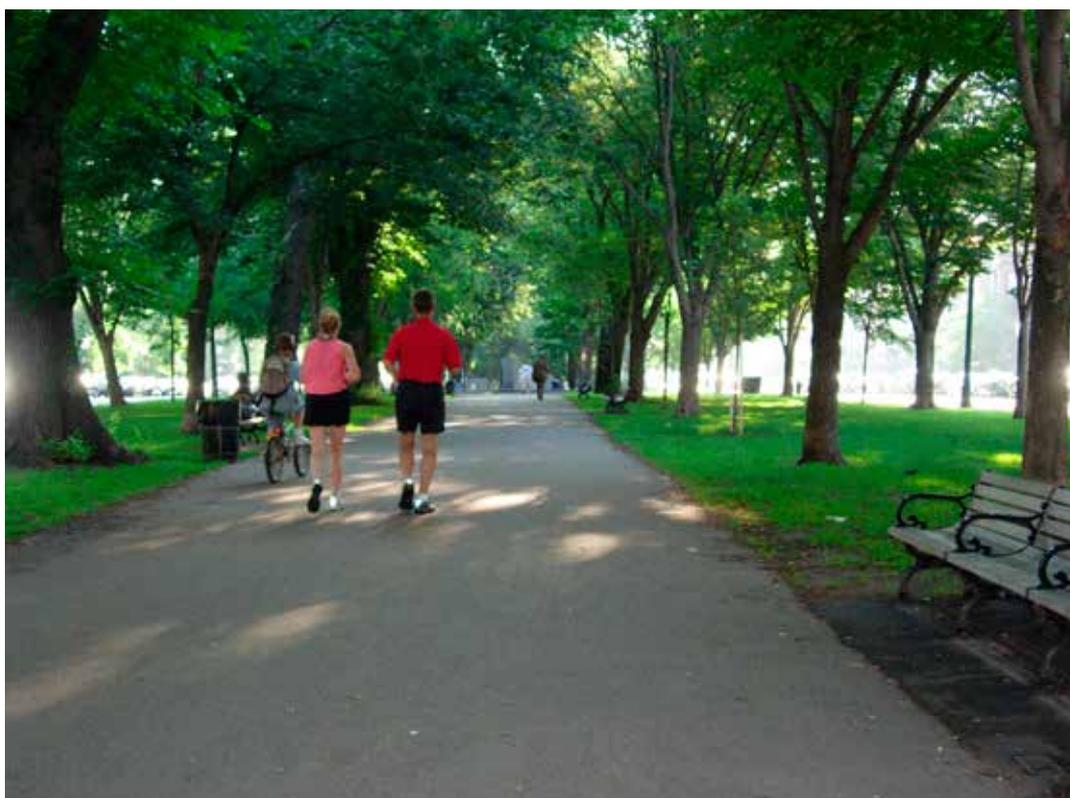
The project is to create a precinct plan to guide future development in the area. The precinct will be bordered by two boulevards and offer improved connections across the city. It will offer model examples of sustainable retrofits and new builds creating a sense of renewal.

### Potential actions

- Identify further constraints and opportunities with stakeholders.
- Undertake a comprehensive precinct plan.
- Create a new works programme.
- Integrate with planning and design guidance along with other regulatory mechanisms.
- Integrate heritage features into design.

#### Guiding principles for the precinct plan will be:

- flow – introduce additional laneways and pedestrian links to make the area more walkable
- variety – emphasise the fine-grained nature of the street grid
- distinction – heighten architectural quality to add the character of the area, and encourage sustainable building and retrofits
- location – choices for small to medium business with the bordering boulevards able to carry larger office blocks on some key sites
- housing choice
- neighbourhoods (residential and mixed-use).



**Figure 32.**  
Existing street medians, like those along Kent and Cambridge terraces can be used to create enjoyable places for pedestrians and cyclists.

# **SOUTHERN VICTORIA/ CUBA PRECINCT**

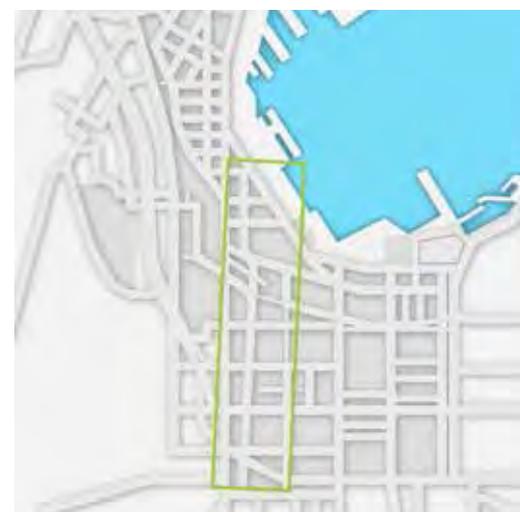
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Despite being a block apart, southern Victoria Street and Cuba Street are two very different spaces. Cuba Street is a heritage area filled with eclectic shops, cafés and bars. It is a physical expression of the city’s creativity, diversity and openness.

Southern Victoria Street, by contrast, feels like the city ‘petering out’. Dominated by cars, its primary function is one of transit across or out of the city. Unlike Cuba Street, it has many sites that are unused or used only for parking, and very little street-level activity to provide atmosphere or encourage pedestrians.

## **Emerging or desired function**

Southern Victoria Street is ready for development and revitalisation as an inner-city neighbourhood, with quality residential buildings, and space for shops and small business offices. This change in use – along with new green spaces, a network of pedestrian walkways, and a clearer street alignment – will reinvigorate this area as a place to live and work. It will make the area more walkable and more lively, and make businesses more viable. Revitalisation will contribute positively to neighbouring areas, including Cuba Street and nearby university campuses including Victoria’s architecture school and Massey’s main campus.



## Areas of opportunity

### Victoria and Cuba precinct plan

The plan will consider:

- a new street alignment that better integrates Victoria Street into Te Aro's street network, improves pedestrian comfort, and increases public domain quality generally
- new paving, landscaping and lighting
- new landscaped spaces to boost Te Aro's civic and ecological performance
- two pocket parks, incorporating a new civic north-south link between Ghuznee and Vivian streets.
- new boulevard landscapes to define major streets.
- pedestrian links strengthened and extended
- new residential building developments to incorporate landscaped private courts, providing increased open space amenity and enhanced privacy, and access to sunlight and cross-ventilation
- development of Marion Street as a shared space in conjunction with development over time of the adjacent land on the east side.

### Guiding principles of the precinct plan will be:

- clear built-structure
- housing choice
- sustain city character
- green links
- renewal.

### Potential actions

- Identify further constraints and opportunities with stakeholders.
- Undertake a comprehensive precinct plan.
- Work with landowners.
- Integrate with planning and design guidance along with other regulatory mechanisms.
- Integrate heritage into design context.



Figure 33.  
A concept proposal  
for the Victoria and  
Cuba precinct.

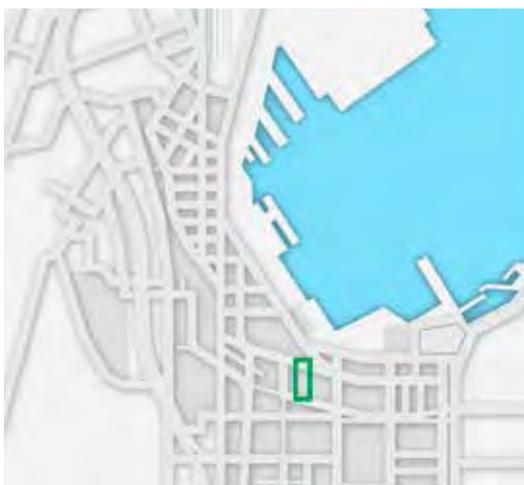
# WATERFRONT CONNECTIONS

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The development of the city's waterfront is governed by a separate urban design framework, the Wellington Waterfront Framework (available at [wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz](http://wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz)) This has guided the creation of quality open spaces for recreation and enjoyment, as well as quality building developments for both public and private use.

Connections to the waterfront from the rest of the central city can be enhanced. In particular, connections to the waterfront from the area between Taranaki and Tory streets could be clearer and easier for pedestrians. Cable Street infill can bring a mixture of residential and cultural uses to the area, enlivening this vital precinct.





**Figure 34.**  
Location of  
Michael Fowler  
Centre car park.

**Figure 35.**  
Existing condition  
of Michael Fowler  
Centre car park.

**Figure 36.**  
Connections to  
the waterfront  
can be made  
either through  
streets, lanes or  
by creating better  
environments in  
existing pedestrian  
thoroughfares.

### Areas of opportunity

#### Waterfront connection plan

The project will consider improvements in connections between the waterfront and the city covering both street links and relationship to built-form and activities.

### Actions

- Undertake precinct connection plan.
- Develop concept plans in response to proposed reduction in traffic on Jervois Quay (in line with the Ngauranga to Wellington Airport Corridor Plan).
- Complete design brief to enhance connection between Lower Cuba Street and the City to Sea Bridge.



# PIPITEA PRECINCT

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The Pipitea Precinct is a large area that includes major city infrastructure: the operational port, the Wellington Regional Stadium, and the Railway Station. The port is a vital part of the city's economy. There are no known or foreseeable changes planned in its core operations in the coming decades. A portion of port land – Harbour Quays – has been deemed surplus for port operations and is being developed under the Port Redevelopment Masterplan, which is consistent with the framework principles. Harbour Quays is a large format office park that has been developing over the past decade and will be an important northern gateway and mixed-use area of the city.

The area borders other vital precincts including:

- the Parliamentary precinct (home to Parliament, courts, government offices and a university campus among other things)
- the Lambton precinct (home to offices as well as the region's premier shopping street)
- the waterfront.

The key consideration for the Pipitea precinct is how to enhance connections to the rest of the central city, while maintaining the integrity of existing vital functions such as:

- moving of goods
- providing a gateway to the city for commuters and for visitors on cruise liners and ferries
- providing access to the stadium for major events that are important to civic pride.





### Areas of opportunity

#### Pipitea Precinct connection plan

The project will consider improvements in connections between the precinct and central city, covering both street links and relationship to built-form and activities.

### Actions

- Undertake precinct connection plan.
- Work with the port on its future master plans and implementation of Harbour Quays.
- Work with the port and NZTA on Aotea Quay gateway.