

# Christchurch Central Recovery Plan

## Summary



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*The Canterbury earthquakes have provided an unprecedented opportunity to rethink, revitalise and renew central Christchurch. We can build the area back better than it was before – increasing its social and cultural value to greater Christchurch, Canterbury and the rest of New Zealand.*

*It is an opportunity too good to pass up.*

The vision is for central Christchurch to become the thriving heart of an international city. It will draw on its rich natural and cultural heritage, and the skills and passion of its people, to embrace opportunities for innovation and growth. Redevelopment will acknowledge the past and the events that have shaped the city, while reflecting the best of the new.

Recovery is not simply restoring what we had before the earthquakes, but making an even better city – which includes improving the social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing of greater Christchurch and its communities. Redeveloping the central city is a key part of this recovery. The Plan also commits significant resources to develop central Christchurch into a vibrant, well-formed

centre that responds to the needs not just of our generation, but also of those that follow.

The Christchurch Central Recovery Plan builds on the Christchurch City Council's draft Central City Plan. During public consultation on that draft, the community submitted over 106,000 ideas.

People said they wanted a greener central city with buildings that contributed more strongly to the city's identity. They wanted a more compact centre that supported a wider range of activities and was easier to get around. Building on these themes, this Recovery Plan sets out how this vision can be achieved. The Recovery Plan defines the form of the central city, identifies the locations

of key anchor projects needed to boost the recovery, and outlines block plans showing what the central city could look like in the future. It also outlines a path towards recovery and to a central Christchurch to be proud of – a distinctive, vibrant and prosperous 21st century city to live, work, play, learn, stay and invest in.

To keep and attract skilled people, Christchurch needs to offer the facilities, services and amenities expected in any similar city around the world. The Plan's proposals are in line with international benchmarks for a major city and make the most of the opportunity to revisit the city's design.

## Why recovery is important

*Christchurch is one of New Zealand's oldest cities and the South Island's largest. It is home to 377,000 people, who have a strong connection to the region. The 'Garden City' holds a special place in New Zealand's culture and heritage. For centuries it was a food basket for the Ngāi Tahu subtribe, Ngāi Tūāhuriri. Today, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu is a key partner in the recovery.*

There are compelling economic reasons to invest in recovery. Canterbury generates about 12 per cent of the national gross domestic product (GDP), and the productivity of Christchurch is key to the prosperity of the wider Canterbury region. Over 70 per cent of Canterbury's economic output comes from activities in greater Christchurch. Its historical strengths in many high-value sectors mean the city can contribute substantially to New Zealand's economic growth, and must continue to do so.

Christchurch already has many of the features of successful international cities. It is home to the South Island's biggest hospital, two universities and seven Crown Research Institutes. It is a key strategic point in the national transport network. Its airport and seaport – the busiest in the South Island – play a major role in getting goods to market, and as a tourism gateway to the South Island.

Despite earthquake damage, the economy continues to perform well, and the underlying physical and social infrastructure remains strong. Christchurch is still particularly well placed to continue to contribute significantly to the national economy.

Central City area:

**608  
hectares**

(including Hagley Park)

New Zealand's  
only  
**24 hour  
airport**

The South Island's  
busiest port with over  
**\$5 billion**  
of exports per annum

## The Central City

*A well-formed and vibrant city centre produces economic and social benefits by bringing people together for business, cultural or social activities. The result is greater productivity, connectedness, development of human capital, sharing of ideas and a shared identity.*



*The city centre is also an expression of our heritage – a reflection of where we have come from, and a vision of what we want to become. Canterbury deserves an exciting and sustainable central city that attracts permanent residents to live, work and play in an environment that is safe, accessible to everyone and responsive to future changes.*

If Canterbury is to achieve this vision, businesses need to be able to operate effectively and confidently. Investors need certainty that their investments will be worthwhile, and located in the right place to get the best possible results.

The Christchurch Central Recovery Plan provides a framework for redeveloping the city centre and will allow investors to identify a range of investment opportunities. Substantial positive action is required to establish confidence and

momentum and, alongside central and local government investment, attract the private and philanthropic investment needed for a successful recovery.

The experience of other cities after a natural disaster shows that substantial redevelopment must start within three years if recovery is to be successful. One year has passed. Speed is of the essence.

## The Concept

*The design concept for the Recovery Plan blueprint is to develop a greener, more accessible city with a compact core and a stronger built identity, making it a great place to live, work, play, learn and visit. It is also a city for all peoples and cultures, recognising, in particular, Ngāi Tahu heritage and places of significance.*

### The Core and the Frame

The Recovery Plan creates a more compact core for the central city. This responds to the community's desire for a more compact central city, and concentrates redevelopment in a geographical area that better matches demand for space in the short-to-medium term. The Core will be a dynamic place, with commercial, retail, hospitality, residential and other development attracted by public investment in key "anchor" projects.

The Core will be bounded by the Ōtākaro/Avon River and to the north, east, and south by a new "Frame". The Frame will provide high quality urban open space and a range of commercial, retail and residential development opportunities, including allowing for expansion of the Core in the future if required. Each of its three components—North, East and South—will have their own distinct character, while Urban Gateways in the north-west and south-east will provide vibrant entry points to the central city.



*Embrace the Avon River, water is dynamic and alive and a wonderful focal point to build around.*

*Stephanie, Rolleston*

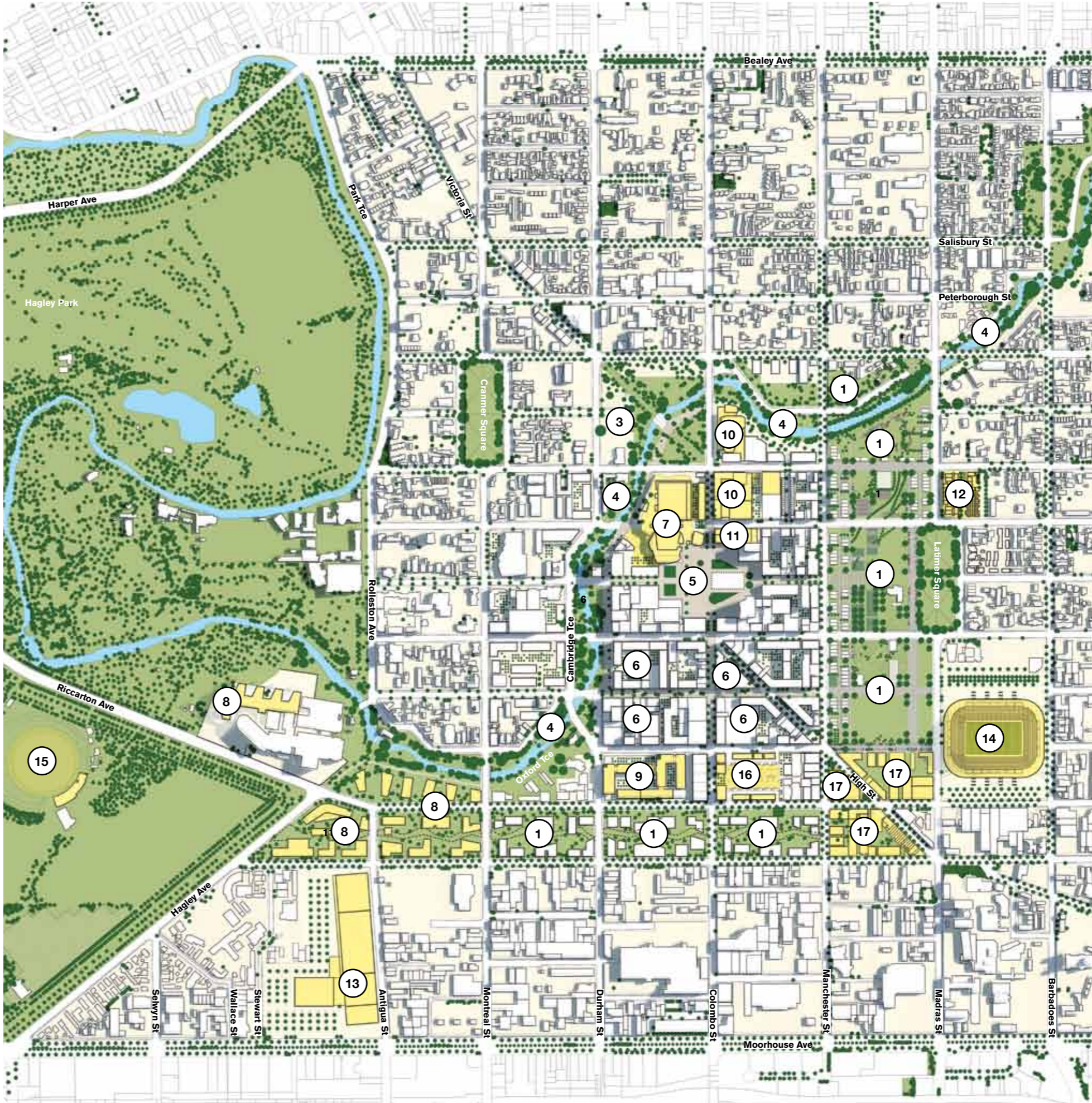


*Illustrative concept of a compact core.*

# The Anchor Projects

The Plan's anchor projects will be developed and delivered in partnership with a number of agencies and stakeholders, including central government, Christchurch City Council, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, the private sector and the community. The projects reflect the community's wishes for the central city, replace facilities that have been destroyed, stimulate other development, attract people, and regenerate and improve the urban form of the city. Having certainty around the location of these projects will also enable the private sector to plan related facilities and invest with confidence.

- The anchor projects are:
1. The Frame
  2. The Earthquake Memorial
  3. Te Puna Ahurea Cultural Centre (indicative site)
  4. Papa o Ōtakaro / Avon River Precinct
  5. The Square
  6. Retail Precinct
  7. Convention Centre Precinct
  8. Health Precinct
  9. Justice and Emergency Services Precinct
  10. Performing Arts Precinct
  11. Central Library
  12. Residential Demonstration Project
  13. Metro Sports Facility
  14. Stadium
  15. Cricket Oval
  16. Bus Interchange
  17. Innovation Precinct



# Anchor Projects

## Ideas to Reality



### The Earthquake Memorial

The memorial will be a place where people can reflect and honour those who died or were injured. It will have local, national and international significance.

Because it is such a significant project, it should begin early, not be rushed, and involve the community. The Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Christchurch City Council, and Ngāi Tahu, will work together to identify the site and begin the community consultation and design process.

### Te Puna Ahurea Cultural Centre

A world-class cultural centre is proposed for the central city as a focal point for cultural celebration and diversity. It will reflect and celebrate Ngāi Tahu and Māori culture and acknowledge Christchurch's place and connections within the Pacific region.

## A Green City

### Papa o Ōtākaro / Avon River Precinct

The winding path of the Ōtākaro / Avon River will mark Christchurch's new river precinct. It will be a high-quality green space and recreational destination within central Christchurch. The new precinct will give priority to pedestrians and cyclists as well as bringing nature into the central city. The interests and values of tangata whenua will be integrated into the new precinct.

## A Green City



### The Square

The Square will once again become the civic heart of central Christchurch. It will be actively used day and night, be greener than before and be suitable for use in a range of weather conditions. Retail and accommodation around the Square will complement the Convention Centre and Central Library.

## A Prosperous City



### Retail Precinct

To compete successfully with suburban retail, central Christchurch will need to offer a unique and distinctive shopping experience. New District Plan provisions will support the development of a new retail precinct within the Core set in an attractive urban environment, and CERA will continue to work with the private sector to facilitate options for its development.



### Convention Centre Precinct

A world-class convention centre will be developed to attract new and exciting events to the city. The Precinct will contain a number of buildings that will reactivate surrounding streets and public spaces. It will support retail and hospitality activities within the Core, and visitor attractions and services throughout central Christchurch. The Convention Centre will be an iconic building and change the way people think about convention centres. It will be able to accommodate several events at one time, initially with space for up to 2000 people in total.

Above: Hyde Park Corner - London.

Above: Te Puna Rotorua – A Place of Welcome. Designer: Carin Wilson. Photographer: Perry Royal.

Above: Jardins de l'Imaginaire Terrasson Dordogne, France

Above: Takutai Square, Britomart, Auckland

Above: Melbourne Convention Centre, Victoria, Australia

# Anchor Projects

## A Prosperous City



### Health Precinct

The redevelopment of Christchurch Hospital provides an opportunity to establish a world-class hub for health education, research and innovation. The Health Precinct will be located near the southwest corner of the Core, alongside the existing hospital.

### Justice and Emergency Services Precinct

This precinct will accommodate justice and emergency services along with Civil Defence and Emergency Management. It will be located in the south-west of the Core, providing easy access to public transport and arterial roads for emergency service movement.

### Performing Arts Precinct

A new Performing Arts Precinct is proposed to offer facilities for music and the performing arts. It could include a centre featuring two auditoria of 1500 and 500 seats respectively, and could also include a permanent home for the Court Theatre, the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and the Music Centre of Christchurch. It will be located at the northern end of the Core, and be complemented by many other arts and cultural projects elsewhere in the city.

Above: Landscaped Health Precinct

Above: Moorabbin Justice Precinct, Victoria, Australia

## A Vibrant City

## A Vibrant City



### Central Library

The location of the new Convention Centre will create the opportunity to relocate and create a new and larger Central Library in the Square. It will be the city's hub for knowledge, heritage materials, recreational reading and listening, and an integral part of central Christchurch.

### Residential Demonstration Project

Christchurch City Council and the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment will collaborate with the private sector on a project to showcase the opportunities for high-quality, medium density residential development in central Christchurch. This project recognises the need to increase the number of people living in the central city to sustain other activities.

### Metro Sports Facility

The new Metro Sports Facility will be a top-class venue and centre of excellence, accessible to people of all ages, abilities and skills. Providing aquatic and indoor sports facilities, it will cater for the day-to-day needs of the recreational, educational and high-performance sporting communities. It will be capable of hosting national and international events.

Above: Courtesy Seattle Public Library

Above: Apartments, Central Sydney

Above: Melbourne Sports & Aquatic Centre

# Anchor Projects

## A Vibrant City



### Stadium

The stadium will be a multi-purpose, large-scale venue that can host international events and concerts. Its proposed location is next to the south-east corner of the Core. It will be well-connected to main transport routes and within easy walking distance of the central city.

Above: Forsyth Barr Stadium, Dunedin



### Cricket Oval

The existing Hagley Park cricket oval will be enhanced, providing central Christchurch with a venue capable of hosting domestic cricket matches and international test matches. The essential 'village green' atmosphere of Hagley Park will be kept, and the area will be fully open to the public on non-event days.

Above: Basin Reserve, Wellington

## An Accessible City



### Bus Interchange

A single centralised Bus Interchange will provide the operational and administrative hub for the public transport network. The Bus Interchange will be located alongside the Core's retail precinct and accessible from all surrounding streets, encouraging the use of public transport. It will be designed to cater for growth to 2041, and there are proposals for coaches and tourist buses to be able to use the Interchange. Bus movements within the Core will be kept to a minimum. In recognition of the popularity of cycling, cycle storage facilities will be incorporated.

Above: St Leonard's Train Station, NSW, Australia

# Accessibility

Accessibility of facilities, public spaces and transport networks will be a priority in the redevelopment of the central city. Planners, architects and urban designers have contributed to the Recovery Plan with guidance from the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol, which emphasises accessibility for everyone. The standards of the Building Act 2004, which requires design for accessibility for all people, will be the minimum as we replace damaged infrastructure and buildings.

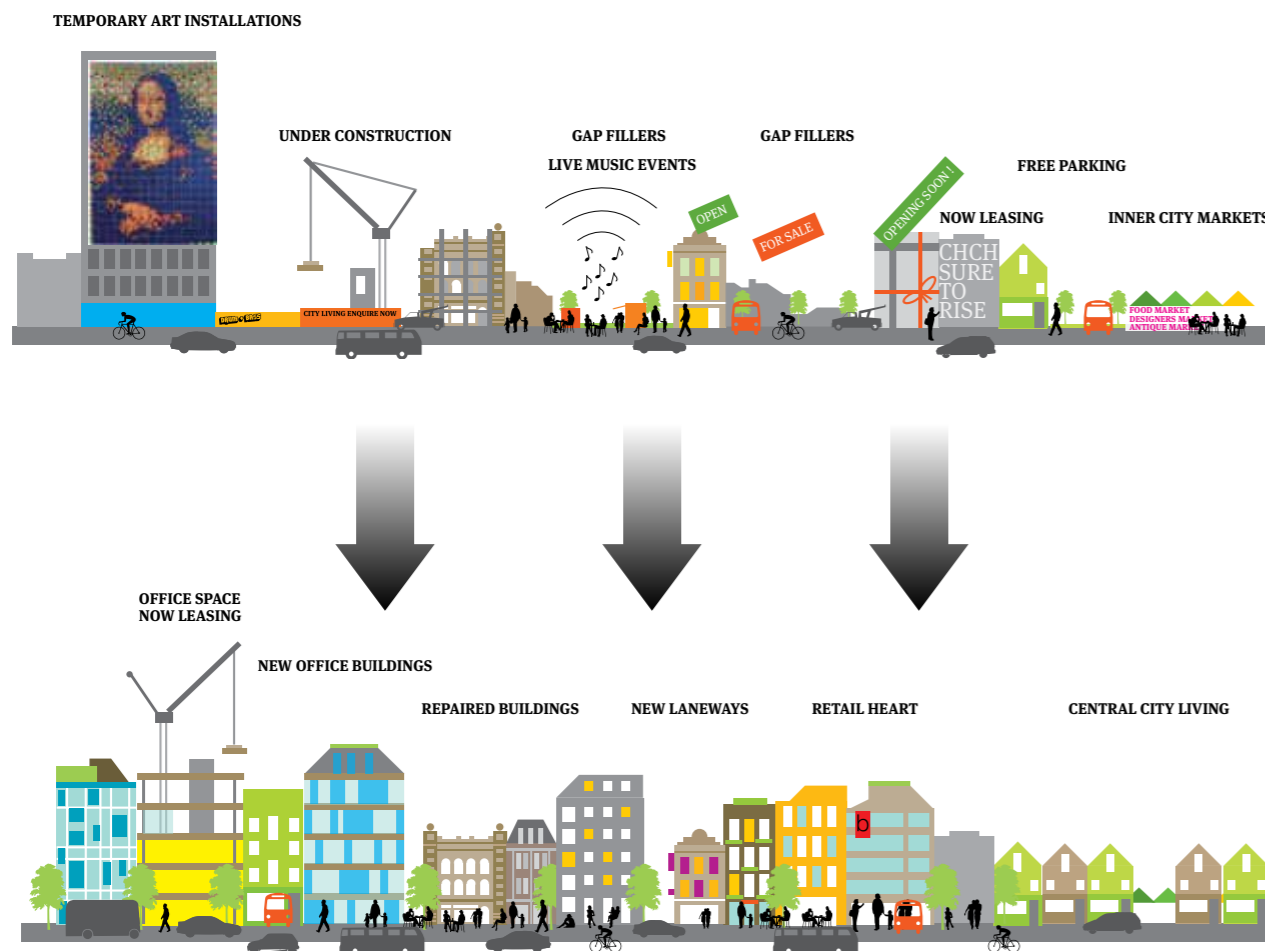
*Wider footpaths. Plantings on roadsides separating vehicles from, pedestrians. Keep traffic access but slow vehicles down.*  
Chris, Hillsborough



## A Transitional City

*The transitional phase – from recovery through to the return of a functioning central city – is a critical element of an effective recovery. This time provides opportunities to test new ideas, explore new concepts and look at new ways to bring people, business and investment back to the central city.*

Vacant sites in the central city will be used to introduce vibrancy and activity to the area in creative and positive ways. Many transitional initiatives will be necessary in the short term. Some of them can be identified now, while others will emerge as the recovery progresses.



## Regulatory approach

*Greater Christchurch has a highly unusual opportunity to create a distinctive, vibrant and prosperous central city that encourages people to reinvest in it, economically and emotionally.*

A chapter in the Recovery Plan sets out the statutory directions necessary to enable the recovery of the central city, directing that amendments to the Christchurch City Council's District Plan be made as soon as possible (see pages 103-108). These changes are detailed in Appendix 1. Some of the key issues the changes address are:

- changes in zoning to help consolidate the Core
- permitted activities within the different zones in central Christchurch
- building height limits that enhance the cityscape yet are also economically viable
- the need to encourage consistently good-quality urban design throughout the central city
- the need for streamlined consenting processes
- comprehensive development in some areas to enhance urban design and public spaces.

A Joint Management Board to consider matters of urban design within the Core will be established.





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