

Newton Community Regeneration Scoping Report

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1.0 Introduction

Newton is an urban fringe suburb of Auckland, New Zealand. It is a historically working-class neighbourhood famous as a creative arts district. Most of Newton no longer exists. Residents were displaced to create the Central Motorway Junction (CMJ), and since its creation, the area has shifted focus towards non-residential uses (Auckland Council, 2016b). This has prevented the community from flourishing. The context of Newton and the creative community will be explored. Furthermore, the area's urban and social environment and current plans will be analysed. A SWOT analysis will help inform an action plan for the area that sets out the vision for the neighbourhood and key moves to achieve said vision.

Figure 1

Upper Symonds Street Carpark Mural



1.1 Vision

The vision is to "rejuvenate Newton by embracing and enabling the creative class within the site. Ensure lower socio-economic, queer, and marginalised communities can stay in the neighbourhood and continue to enhance Newton's edgy nature through their music and art."

Figure 2

City Rail Link Local Artwork



2.0 Context

2.1 Boundary

As stated, Newton has progressively focused more on non-residential uses since the creation of the CMJ (Auckland Council, 2016b); furthermore, what little is left of Newton is cut off from nearby suburbs due to the CMJ. These factors have resulted in a strong community, which a boundary can be drawn around, not eventuating. The boundary created follows Newton's urban form, which comprises more large-grain and mixed-use developments and differs significantly from the smaller-grain, single-use residential developments seen in the South and West, as seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Newton Boundary Map

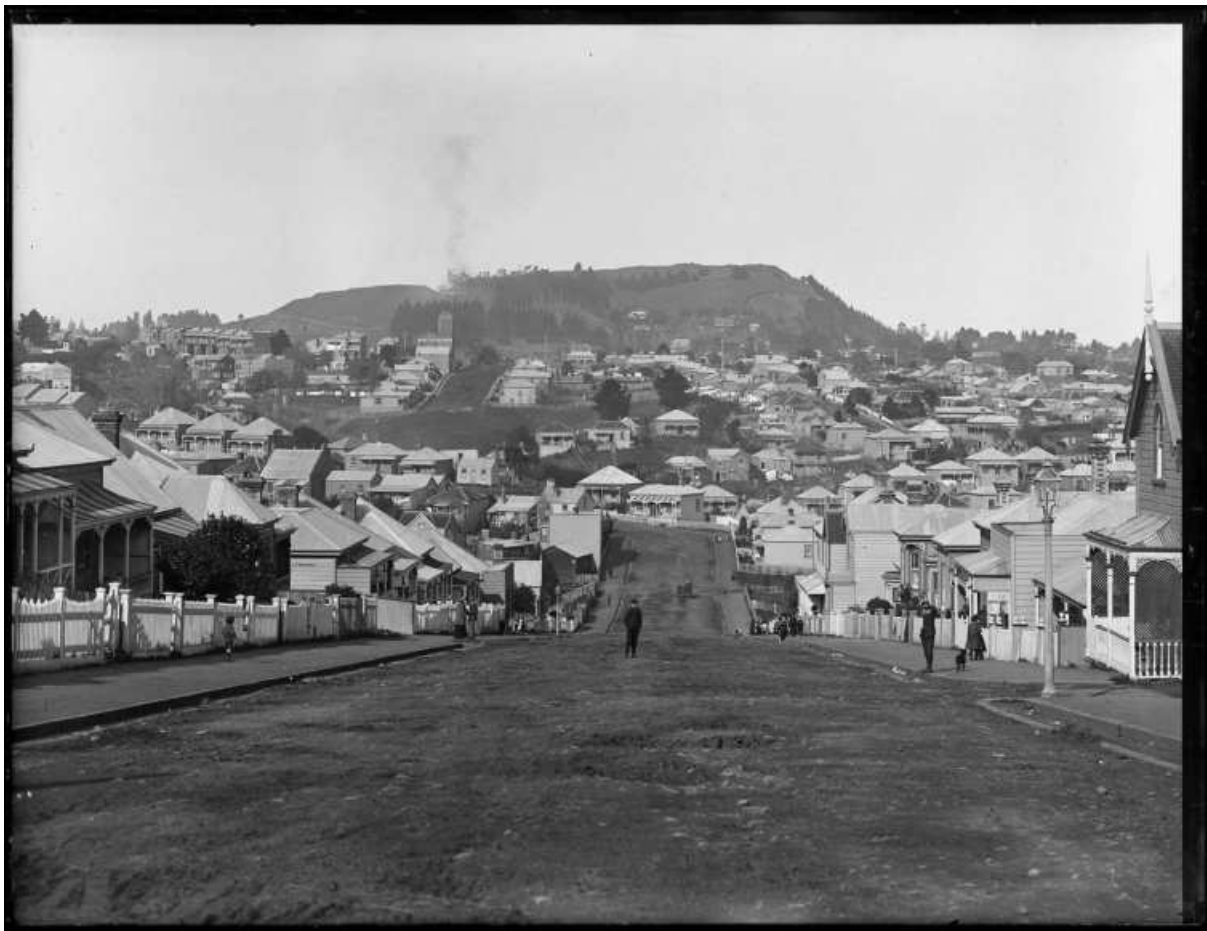


2.2 Early Beginnings

The history of modern Newton started with the subdivision of land in the area in the 1860s following the creation of a bridge linking Newton Road to Karangahape and Upper Symonds Street; following the subdivision, Newton became a popular suburb where working men could afford a home of modest size near the city (Howcroft, n.d.-a, n.d.-b).

Figure 4

Mount Eden and Newton Road, 1904



Note. (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 1-W1126 & Winkelmann, 1904)

2.3 History of Displacement

2.3.1 Proposal & creation of motorways

The CMJ is an interchange of State Highways 1 and 16, with various on and off-ramps providing access to the city and nearby suburbs. The CMJ was proposed in the 1960s. Newton was chosen as the site for creating the CMJ due to the view of the neighbourhood as a slum (City Rail Link, n.d.-a). Fifteen thousand buildings were demolished, fifty thousand people displaced (Te, 2018), and communities were ripped apart, as seen in Figures 5 and 6. The commercial centre on Upper Symonds Street and the wider community suffered greatly as Newton became depopulated (Auckland Council, 2016b).

Figure 5

Newton Aerial, 1940



Note. (Auckland Council, 1940)

Figure 6

Newton Aerial, 2016



Note. (Auckland Council, 2016)

2.4 History as a Creative Arts District

Newton has a strong history as a creative arts district. The Orange Coronation Hall and the Powerstation have been home to many famous musical appearances in the past and present (Brown, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). St David's Memorial Church was threatened by demolition; community activism led to the Friends of St David's Trust purchasing the church and creating Kāhui St David's; the space is now a gathering and creative space for the community (Friends of St David's, n.d.; Kāhui St David's, n.d.).

Figure 7

Fatal Jelly Space at The Powerstation, Mount Eden, 1989

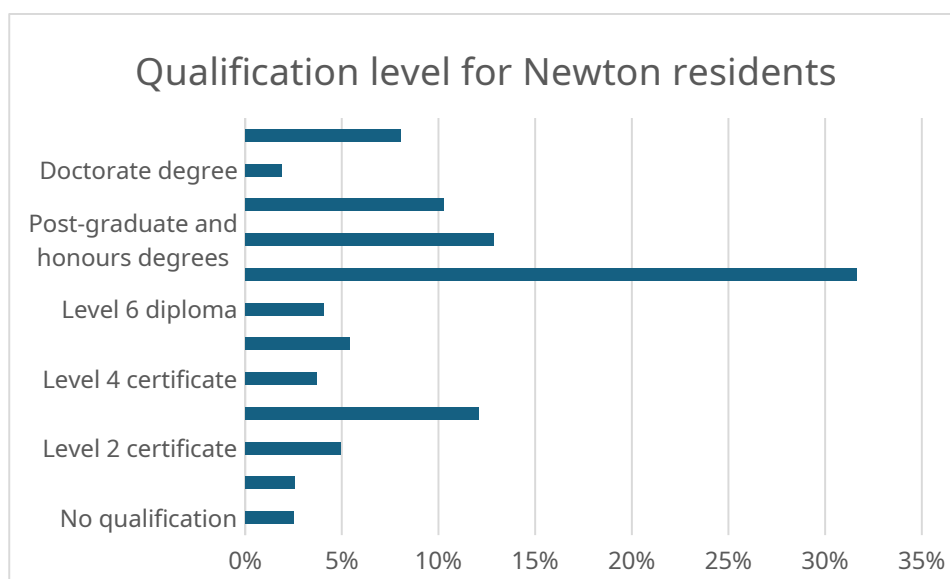


Note. (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 273-PAG038-02 & Page, 1989)

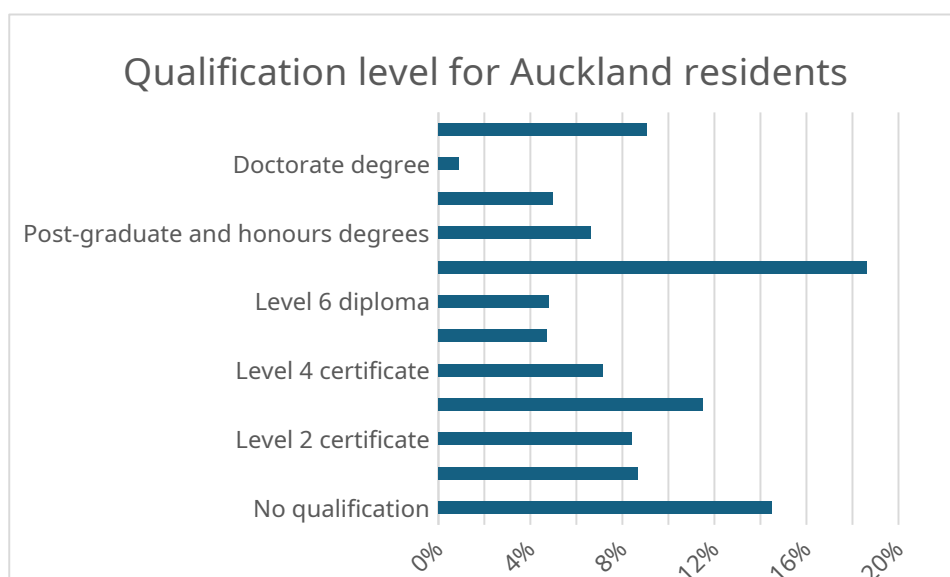
2.5 Demographics

Though the suburb has been historically known as a working-class neighbourhood and a creative arts district, data from the 2018 census suggest that Newton is progressively gentrifying and that the creative community is at risk of displacement. Current residents have far higher education levels on average than wider Auckland, as seen in Figures 8 and 9. Furthermore, incomes on average are also higher compared to wider Auckland, as seen in Figures 10 and 11. Most workers are professionals, managers, and administrative workers, as seen in Figures 12 and 13. Furthermore, Newton's years spent at the usual residence are very short, as seen in Figures 14 and 15. This suggests that new residents have recently moved in, potentially due to the displacement of the original population.

Overall, the demographics suggest the area has progressively gentrified throughout the years. While land values remain cheap within the neighbourhood for now, gentrification and further displacement of residents are possible threats. It is important to note that the statistical area 2 for the neighbourhood also contains data for Eden Terrace, to the South, and that the data is seven years old. Therefore, the data is only indicative. However, as will be discussed, observations of the urban form and community verify the suspicion that the neighbourhood is at risk of gentrification.

Figure 8*Qualification Level for Newton Residents*

Note. (Statistics New Zealand, 2019a)

Figure 9*Qualification Level for Auckland Residents*

Note. (Statistics New Zealand, 2019a)

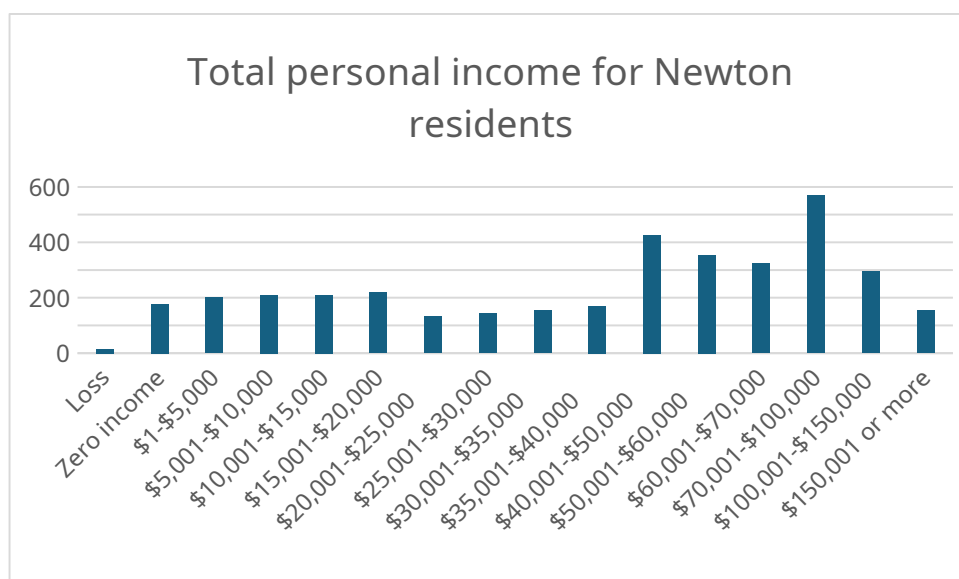
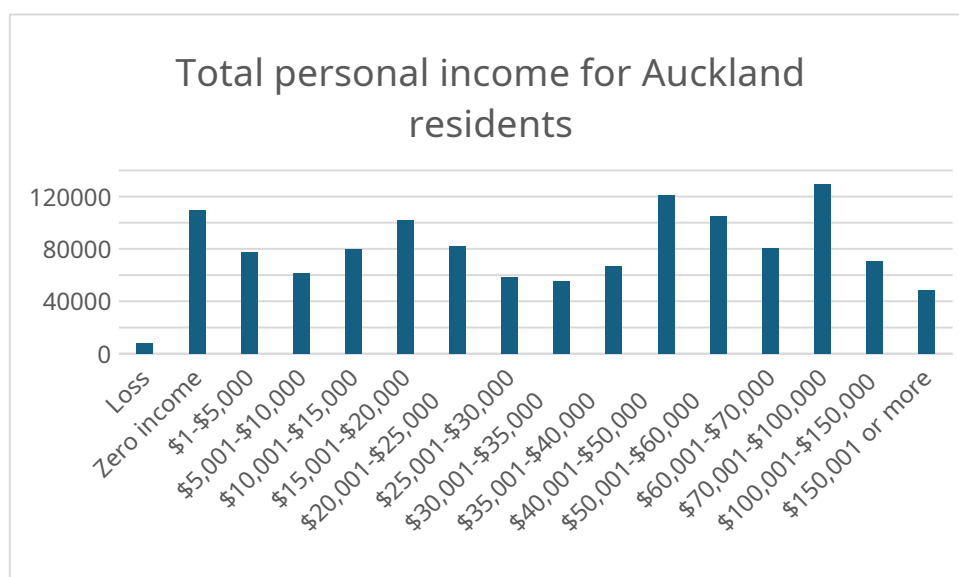
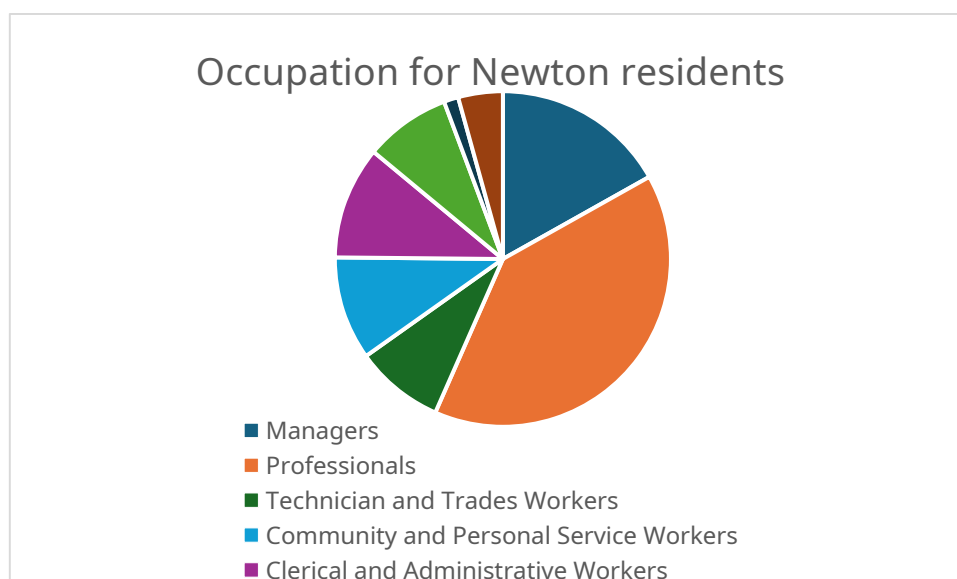
Figure 10*Total Personal Income for Newton Residents**Note.* (Statistics New Zealand, 2019c)**Figure 11***Total Personal Income for Auckland Residents**Note.* (Statistics New Zealand, 2019c)

Figure 12

Occupation for Newton Residents



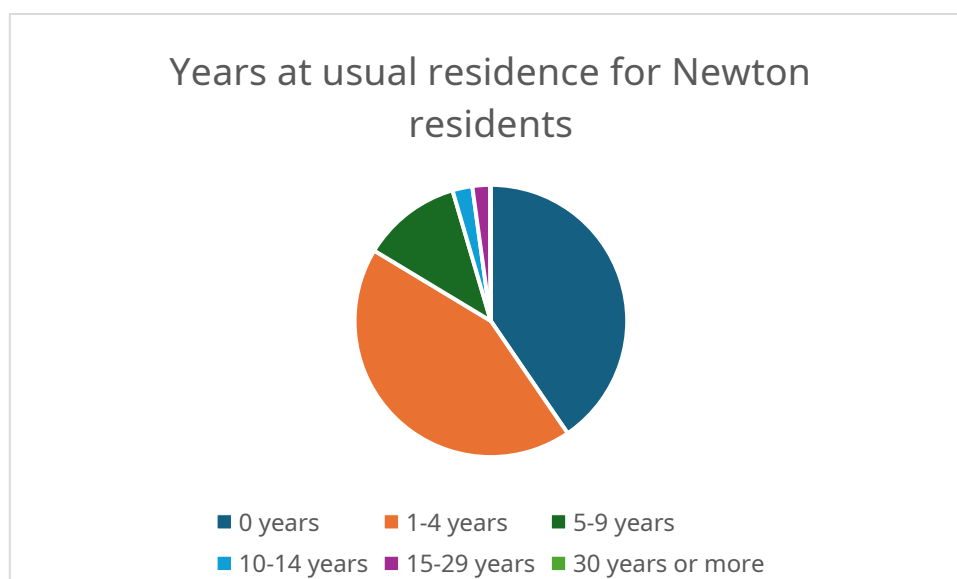
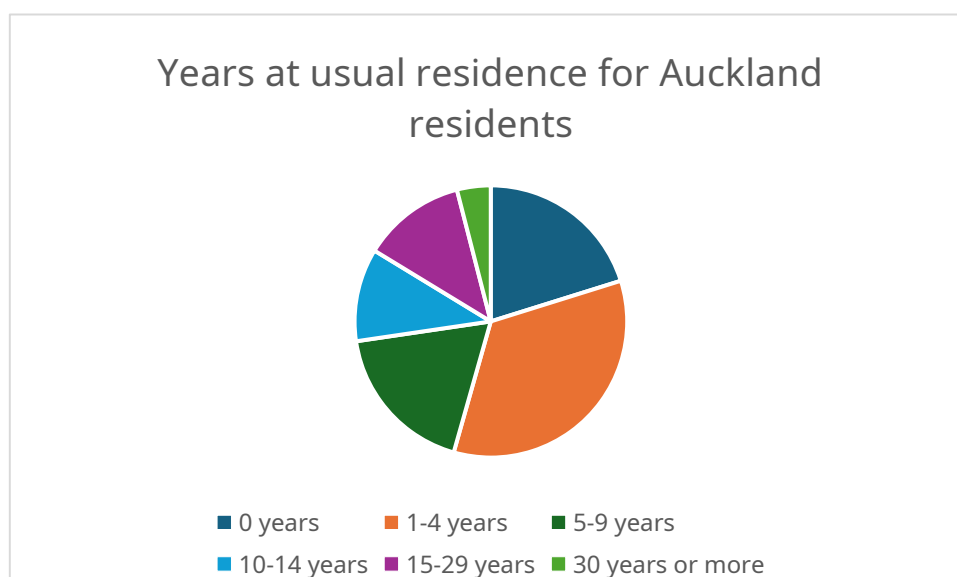
Note. (Statistics New Zealand, 2019b)

Figure 13

Occupation for Auckland Residents



Note. (Statistics New Zealand, 2019b)

Figure 14*Years at Usual Residence for Newton Residents**Note.* (Statistics New Zealand, 2019d)**Figure 15***Years at Usual Residence for Auckland Residents**Note.* (Statistics New Zealand, 2019d)

3.0 Analysis

3.1 Urban Form

As stated, the urban form of Newton is distinct from surrounding areas. The historic town centre along Symonds Street is classified as a special character area that seeks to preserve the historic streetscape (Auckland Council, 2016b), as seen in Figure 16, and buildings generally consist of two-storey mixed-use buildings containing commercial and offices.

Figure 16

Historic Streetscape at the Intersection of New North Road and Korari Street



An example of the architectural variety within the site is The Orange, which consists of the historic music venue, Orange Coronation Hall, and new upscale apartments that complement the historic building, as shown in Figure 17 below.

Figure 17

The Orange Coronation Hall



Note. (dpa architects, 2016)

3.2 Community Amenities

Basque Park is the only green space in the area and the only significant public gathering space. Various upscale residential developments surround Basque Park, as seen in Figure 23, raising concerns about whether the park is equitably accessible to all residents of Newton. A community garden named OMG operates in the neighbourhood and feeds local families (McNamara, n.d.). Uptown Business Association advocates for the interests of businesses in the area (Uptown Business Association, n.d.-a). As stated, Kāhui St David operates as a gathering space, and music venues such as the Powerstation provide opportunities to creatives in the neighbourhood.

3.3 Social Environment

Observations conducted on 01/03/2024 illustrated that the commercial strip located in the historic town centre is a vital activity node. Most activity was borne from visitors travelling for specific amenities such as the Powerstation, as seen in Figure 18. This further reinforced that the neighbourhood has yet to create a strong and resilient community. Specific community amenities such as the Auckland Indian Association or Kāhui St David act as gathering spaces and social settings for visitors and residents alike.

Figure 18

Queues at the Powerstation



3.4 Existing Plans

3.4.1 City Rail Link

City Rail Link (CRL) redevelops Maungawhau station into a significant transfer at the heart of Auckland's future rail network, with further transit-oriented development, urban regeneration, and streetscaping works planned (City Rail Link, n.d.-c; Eke Panuku, n.d.). Eke Panuku will deliver new homes, shops, and offices in partnership with other Organisations, such as Kainga Ora (Eke Panuku, n.d.). Whilst exciting, CRL furthers the risk of gentrification and displacement; whilst Kainga Ora developments are part of existing plans, it remains to be seen whether enough affordable housing will be provided to counteract increasing development pressures.

Figure 19

Maungawhau Station Render



Note. (City Rail Link, n.d.-b)

3.4.2 Uptown Business Association Strategic Plan

Uptown Business Association operates within the neighbourhood and has a strategic plan that aims to improve Newton's recognition, look, and feel; their focus is on advocacy, ensuring that the benefits of CRL benefit the entire neighbourhood (Uptown Business Association, n.d.-c).

Figure 20

Uptown Map



Note. (Uptown Business Association, n.d.-b)

3.4.3 Newton & Eden Terrace Plan

Newton & Eden plan is a 30-year plan set out by Auckland Council and the relevant local boards. The plan focuses on the area's potential post-CRL due to TOD and aims to promote the area "as a prominent centre for business, residents and visitors" and calls for creating high-quality pedestrian and cyclist amenities (Auckland Council, 2016b, p.7). Most plans for Newton call for urban realm improvements like increased connectivity and better pedestrian and cycling amenities. Whilst these plans would no doubt improve Newton's attractiveness to prospective residents and workers, they also increase the risk of gentrification.

Figure 21

City Rail Link Mural



3.5 Community Profile

Most plans identified call for urban realm improvements, such as increased connectivity and better pedestrian and cycling amenities. These plans would no doubt improve Newton's attractiveness to prospective residents and workers; they also increase the risk of gentrification and place creatives at risk of further displacement. This regeneration plan focuses on the creative population, musicians, and artists who rely on creating and selling their art, who are often less well-off and part of marginalised communities.

Figure 22

Basque Park & Surrounding Apartments



4.0 Regeneration Plan

4.1 SWOT

A SWOT analysis, synthesised utilising the context and analysis of the neighbourhood can be seen in Figures 23, 24, 25, 26 and Table 1 below.

Figure 23

Strengths Map



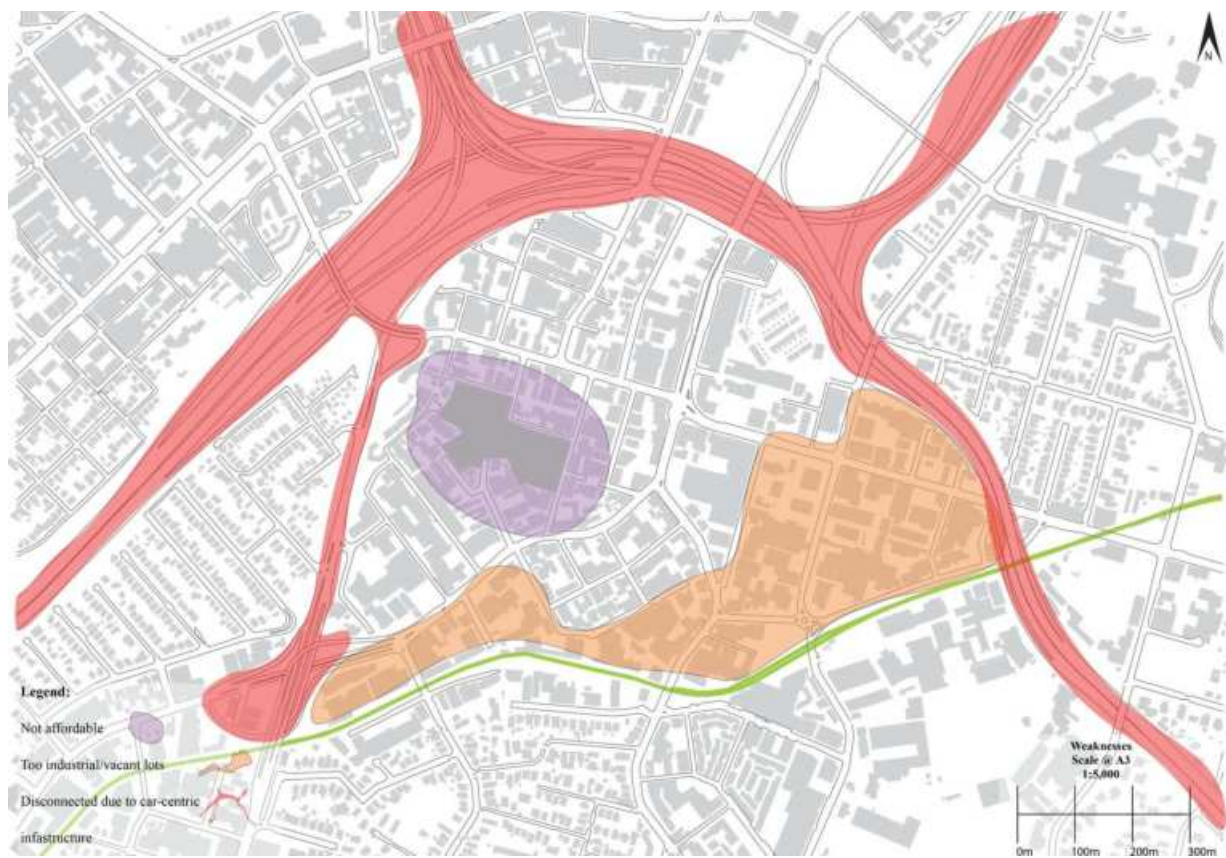
Figure 24*Weakness Map*

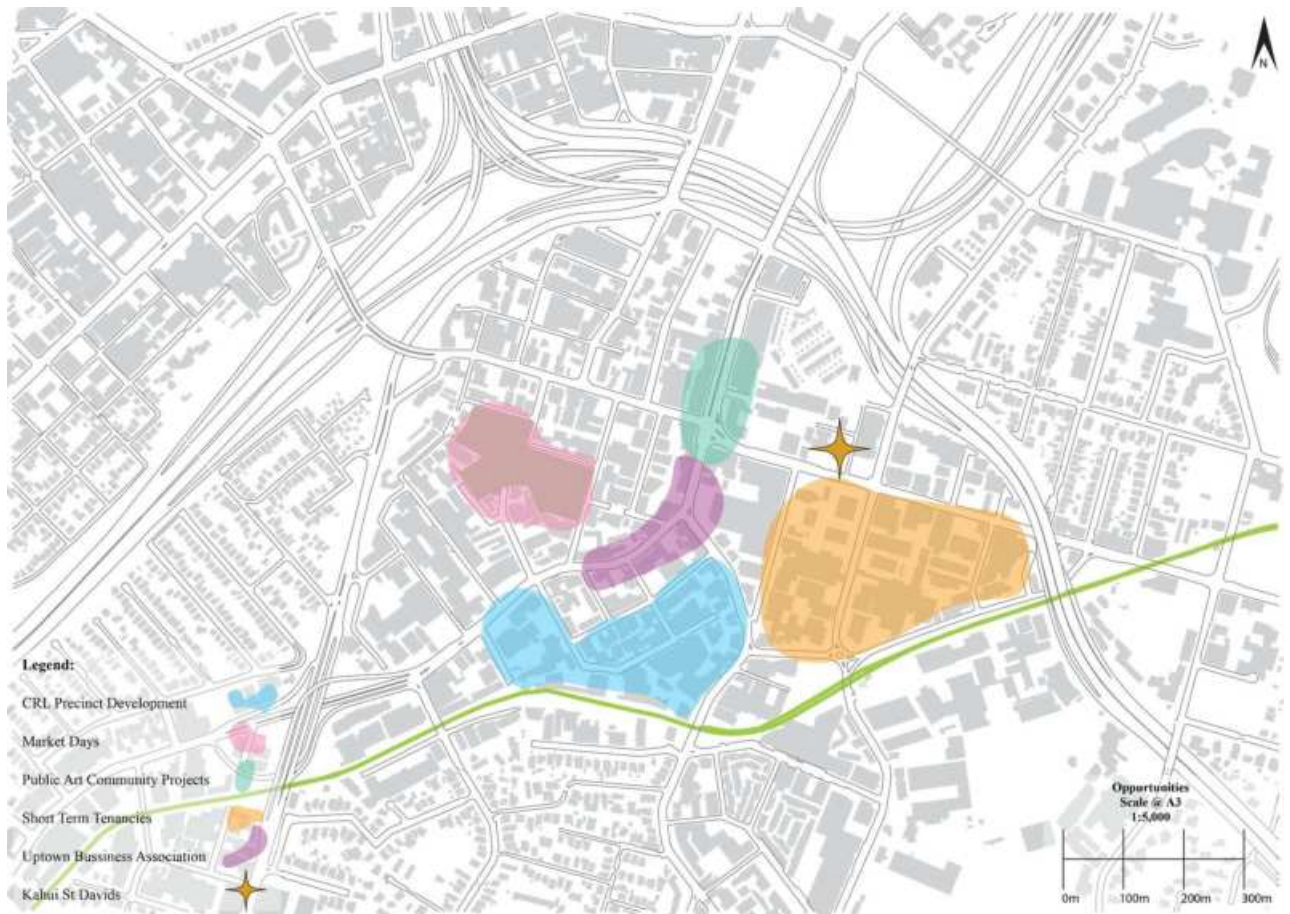
Figure 25*Opportunity Map*

Figure 26*Threat Map*

Table 1:*SWOT Analysis*

Strengths	Kahui St Davids
	Powerstation
	Strong history as a creative arts district
	Uptown Business Association as a community advocacy group
Weaknesses	New housing developments unaffordable
	Too industrial and many vacant lots
	Disconnected from nearby suburbs
	Car-centric
Opportunities	CRL precinct incorporating public art
	CRL precinct incorporating public housing
	Public art community art projects
	Uptown Business Association as an advocacy group
	Kahui St Davids
	Developing short-term tenancies utilising vacant industrial lots
	AI training workshop
Threats	Gentrification
	Lack of recognition
	Loss of unique culture and history

4.2 Vision

The vision for Newton is to “Rejuvenate Newton into its former glory by embracing and enabling the creative class within the site. Ensure lower socio-economic, queer, and marginalised communities can stay in the neighbourhood and continue to enhance Newton's edgy nature through their music and art.”

Figure 27

Upper Symonds Street



4.3 Action Plan

Below in Figure 28 and Table 2, key moves and an action timeline to achieve the vision set are outlined.

Figure 28

Key Moves



Table 2:*Key Moves & Timeline*

Key Move	Action	Timeline
Enable Community Advocacy	Enable Uptown Business Association as an advocacy group	1-2 years
	Promote the establishment of an artist's association	1-2 years
	Promote Inclusive Zoning	1-2 years
	Influence and promote state housing as part of CRL development	5-10 years
	Fundraise for further resourcing of Kāhui St David's	1-2 years
Enable Community Events	Facilitate Community Arts Projects	3-5 years
	Facilitate market days	3-5 years
	Facilitate short-term tenancies utilising vacant lots	5-10 years
Enable Artists	Promote and advertise Kāhui St David's	1-2 years
	Provide fee art creation resources at Kāhui St David's	3-5 years

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, Newton is a neighbourhood that has yet to flourish; analysis of the context and environment of the site led to the identification of the creative class as a community of interest, which is at threat of being displaced out of the neighbourhood. A vision for Newton, in which artists flourish and can live, was set out, and key moves to achieve the vision were also created. Enabling the creatives creates the potential for a better Newton, where a distinct community and identity are achievable.

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