

High Street Permanence Framework

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Word Count: 1112

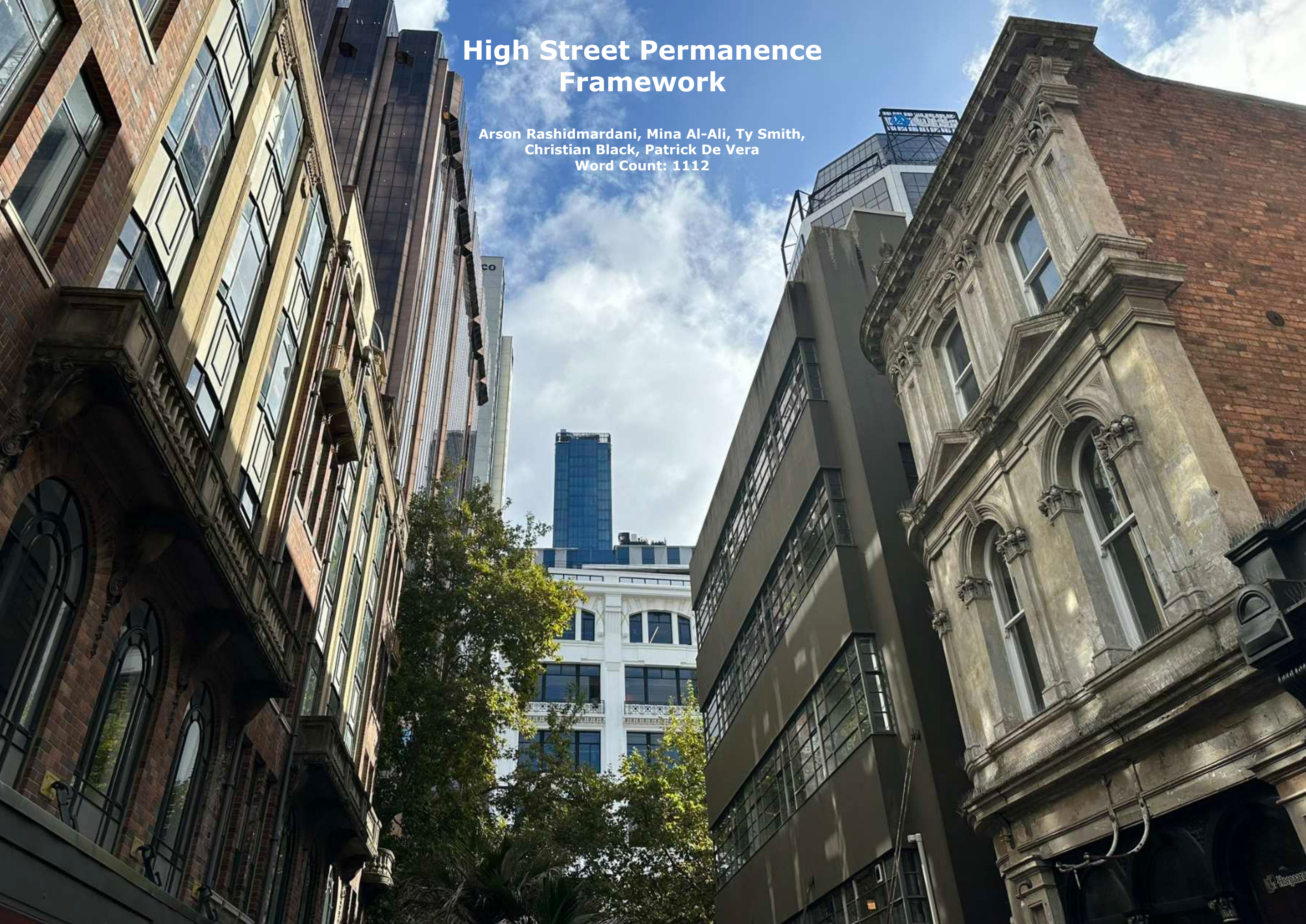


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Purpose

Tactical urbanism is a planning approach gaining traction worldwide; it allows agencies to implement interventions that improve the urban realm and are often people-focused, using cheaper materials and setting a pathway to permanence for further interventions that iterate on current designs¹. This pathway to permanence plan aims to set out an ambitious and people-focused vision that will make the High Street district a city-wide attraction. Through deep site analysis and an on-site walking safety audit, a SWOC analysis will be synthesised, helping to set out four key moves and further actions which, when implemented, will achieve the vision of High Street as a lively, green and people-first space.

1 (New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, 2020)

Executive Summary

Vision

Pathway to Permanence envisions High Street as a lively, green and people-first space where walking, cycling, and public life all thrive. High Street will be a safe, inviting, energetic street. Balancing the need for movement with moments to pause, connect and enjoy the vibrant urban fabric of the district. With the intelligent permanent design, High Street will be transformed into a healthier, more vibrant experience where the city comes alive through tactical urbanism.

Key Moves

1	<i>Prioritizing People & Active Transport</i>
2	<i>Create a Welcoming & Green Streetscape</i>
3	<i>Activate High Street as a Destination</i>
4	<i>Strengthen Community Ownership & Engagement</i>

Interventions Table

Key Moves				Interventions	
1	2	3	4		
				1	Partner with local artists to paint tactical urbanism traffic calming measures.
				2	Create a dynamic pedestrian street with retractable bollards.
				3	Undertake maintenance of existing paving.
				4	Remove planters from the existing boardwalk and investigate a further extension.
				5	Add clear signage to improve legibility and navigation and integrate High Street into the wider district.
				6	Install bike parking.
				7	Transform existing crossings into raised crossings.
				8	Investigate the possibility of creating a green wall on 27 High Street, viewable from Freyberg Square.
				9	Utilise existing loading zones for a boardwalk extension and planters to make Chancery Street a more welcoming and green pedestrian experience.
				10	Work with businesses to promote installing hanging baskets and planters alongside active frontages and balconies.
				11	Work with businesses to promote a consistent awning along the entire length of the High Street.
				12	Facilitate the installation of fairy lights along associated laneways.
				13	Transform existing parking spaces into parklets with benches and trees.
				14	Encourage community events at Freyberg Square and Ellen Melvin.
				15	Hold live music nights at Freyberg Square.
				16	Make food trucks and mobile laundromats daily at night to promote activity and passive surveillance.
				17	Work with local artists to create a piece of interactive public art.
				18	Promote the creation of a weekly Saturday market at Freyberg Square.
				19	Work with businesses to extend business hours.
				20	Establish a pop-up community management office.
				21	Hold co-design workshops.
				22	Work with local families to hold events where games can be painted on High Street during pedestrianised hours.
				23	Hold movie nights at Freyberg Square.
				24	Create a notice board to monitor ongoing feedback.
				25	Promote early morning yoga sessions at Freyberg Square.

Context

Wider Context

High Street is located in the CBD of Auckland, a rapidly growing city¹. Most population growth is located in outer suburbs². There has been a decrease in foot traffic in the area since COVID-19³. Our project coincides with other ongoing projects aimed at transforming the CBD into a pedestrian-friendly area⁴.

Built History

High Street and its service lanes grew to serve Shortland Street, Auckland's first commercial thoroughfare. Over time, Queen Street overtook Shortland Street in importance. High Street's built history demonstrates that it has always functioned as a local street adjacent to a thoroughfare, not a thoroughfare itself.⁵

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- 1 (Statistics New Zealand, 2021)
 - 2 (Auckland Council, 2024a)
 - 3 (Heart of The City Auckland, 2024)
 - 4 (Auckland Council, n.d.-b)
 - 5 (Auckland Council & Auckland Tourism, n.d.)

Figure 2: *Vulcan Lane*

Note: (Winkelmann, 1920)



Figure 1: *Wider Context Map*

Note: (Eagle Technology Group Ltd, 2025) Adapted by Author



Figure 3: *Figure Ground Map*

Note: (Land Information New Zealand, 2025) Adapted by Author



Context

Demographics

The inner CBD population is predominantly European and Asian¹. Most individuals using the High Street District are visitors rather than residents. High Street has lost a significant amount of pedestrian traffic since COVID-19. However, pedestrian congestion is still an issue in the district, particularly on High Street, especially during 11:00 - 17:00.²

Land Use

The High Street District is zoned as the City Centre Zone³. Freyberg Square, a recently renovated public square, is at the centre of the site, fronting the Metropolis Tower, one of the tallest residential buildings in New Zealand. The High Street District and Chancery Square are known for their various food and drink shops. Beloved retail stores such as Unity Books also call the site home. High Street's land use consists of a mix of residential, commercial, retail, hotel, and public squares. Victoria Street Carpark, a council-owned carpark, is also a significant land use.

Medium-Long Term Analysis

High Street's future has strong potential for increased foot traffic, local population and investment. High Street is within the City Rail Link's Te Wai Horotiu station walking catchment. This will likely negate High Street's current throughfare role to Britomart station. However, the increased overall foot traffic will likely greatly offset this. Te Wai Horotiu station will also drive the continued growth of the City Centre's jobs and residential population⁴. 1200 student housing units are already under construction within 300m of High Street⁵. The Downtown carpark redevelopment may also spark future interest in redeveloping the Victoria St Carpark.

1 (Statistics New Zealand, 2018)

2 (Heart of the City Auckland, n.d.)

3 (Auckland Council, 2016)

4 (Auckland Council, 2024b)

5 (Gibson, 2024; Lorne Street Development, n.d.)

Figure 4: *Auckland Population*

Note: (Statistics New Zealand, 2018)

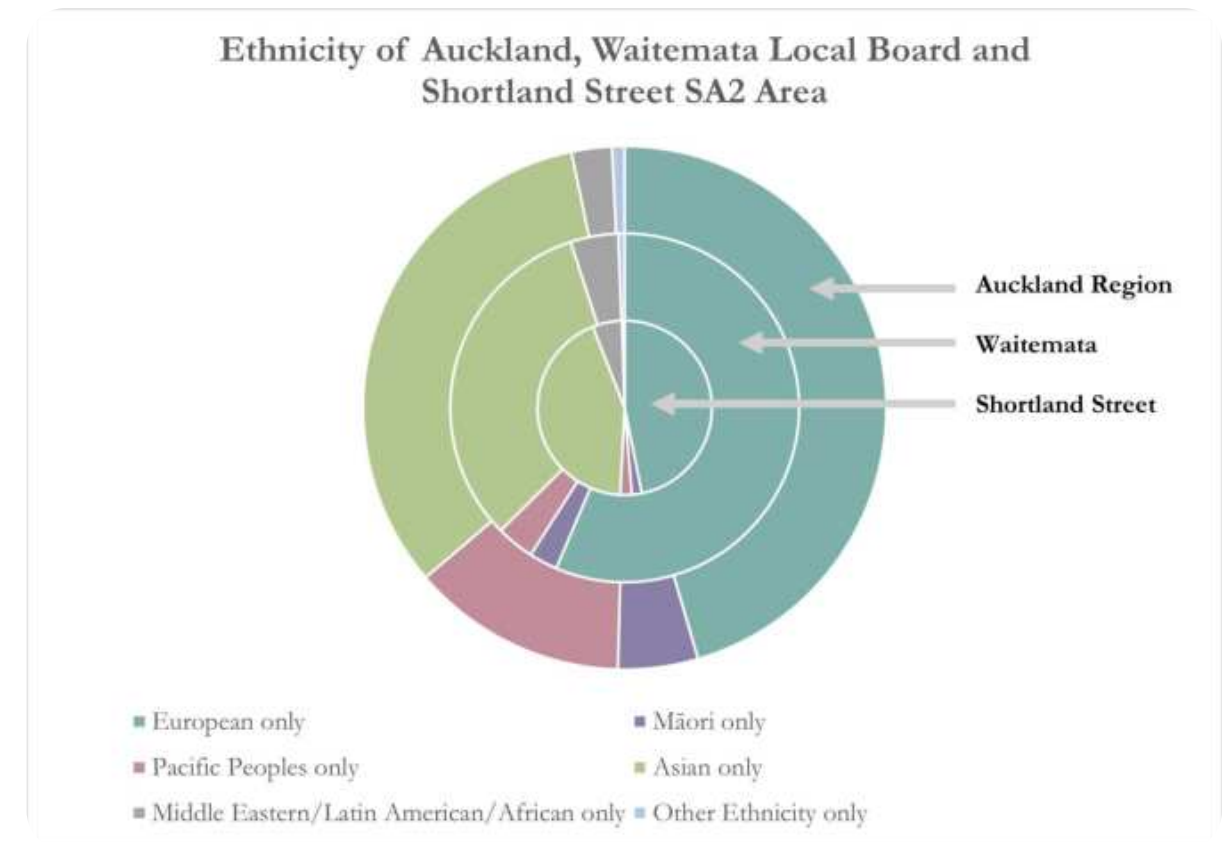


Figure 5: *Land Use*

Note: (Auckland Council, 2016) Adapted by Author



Figure 6: *Lynchian Analysis*
Note: Author's own work



Transport

Figure 7: *Pedestrian Network*
Note: Author's own work



Figure 8: *Walkable Catchment*
Note: (Auckland Council, n.d.-a) Adapted by Author

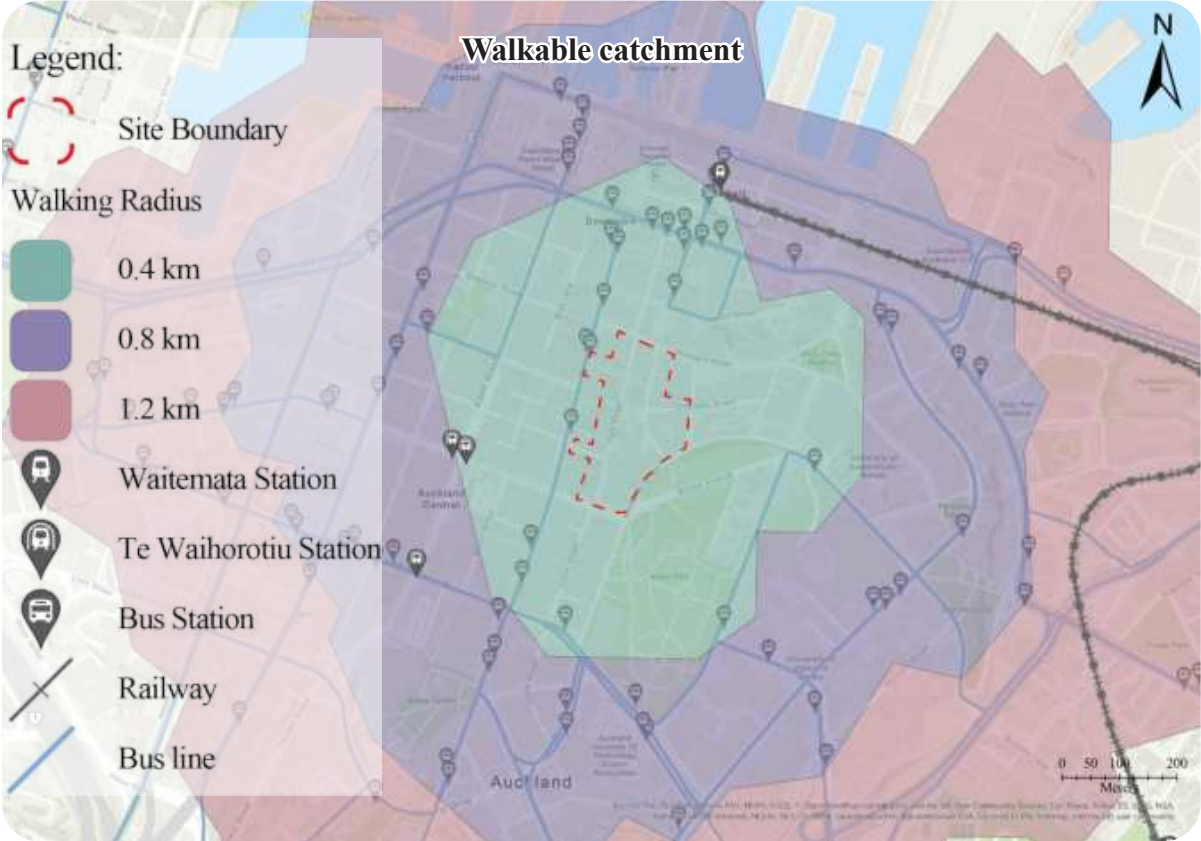


Figure 9: *Wider Transport Network*
Note: (Auckland Council, n.d.-a) Adapted by Author



Context

Blue & Green Networks

High Street has a distinct lack of green spaces. While Albert Park is nearby, there is little greenery on the site, predominantly around Freyberg Square. There are no constraints associated with blue networks.

Public Life Survey

The High Street District is very busy, and particularly used by pedestrians. Vehicular traffic volumes along High Street are relatively low, except near the exit of Victoria Street Car Park. Pedestrians typically utilise the left side of the High Street due to more space. However, congestion is still an issue due to planters. There are few areas to sit and rest, except at Freyberg Square and along the lane-ways, which are well used.

Figure 11: *Freyberg Square*

Note: (Stellar, 2020)



Figure 10: *Blue & Green Networks*

Note: (Auckland Council, n.d.-a) Adapted by Author



Figure 12: *Te Waihorotiu Station*

Note: (Link Alliance, 2024)



Figure 13: Hourly Pedestrian Traffic
Note: (Heart of the City Auckland, n.d.)

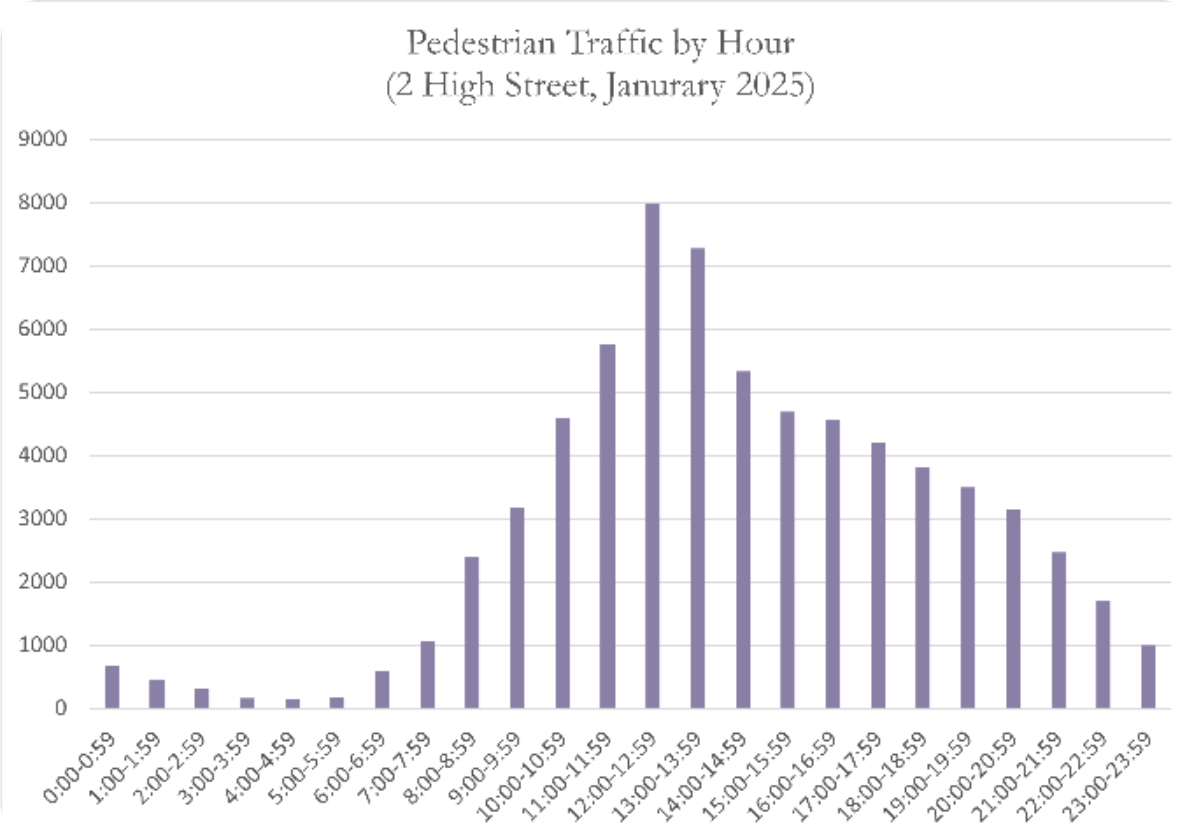


Figure 14: Monthly Pedestrian Traffic
Note: (Heart of the City Auckland, n.d.)

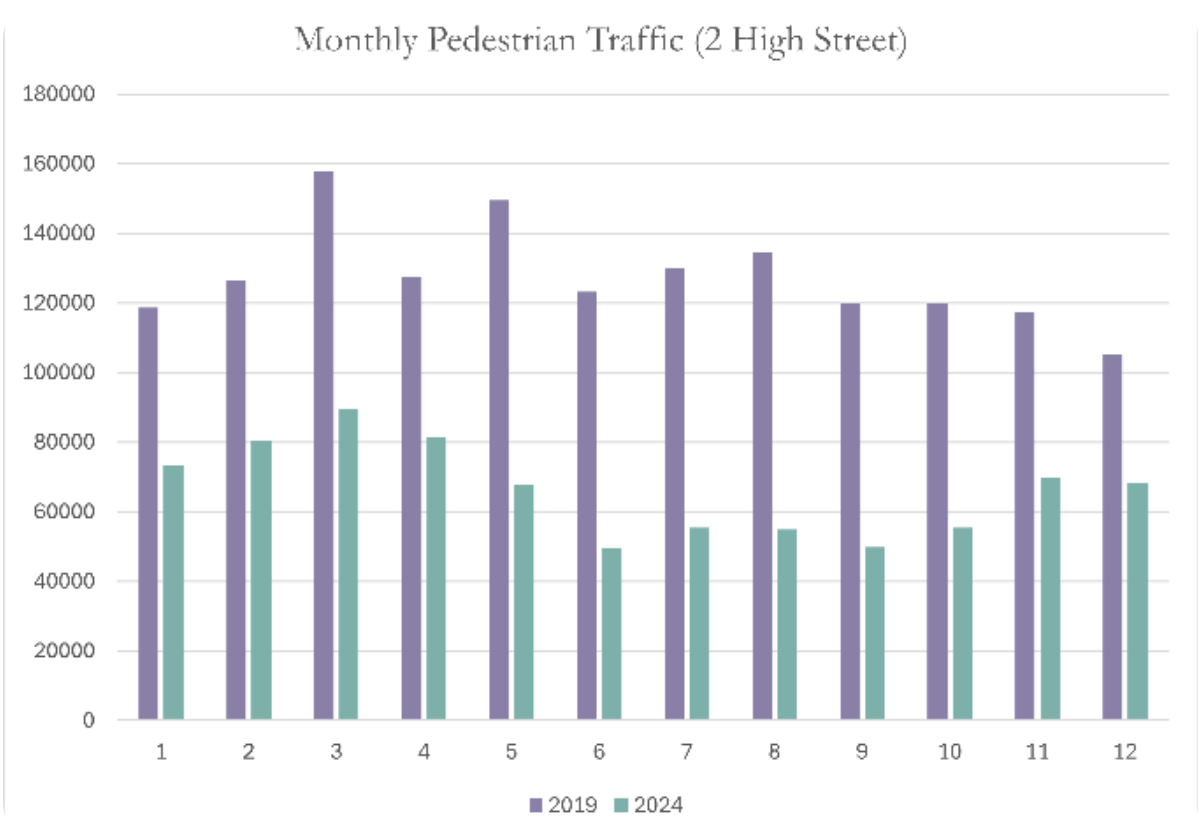


Figure 15: Healthy Streets Check
Note: Author’s own work

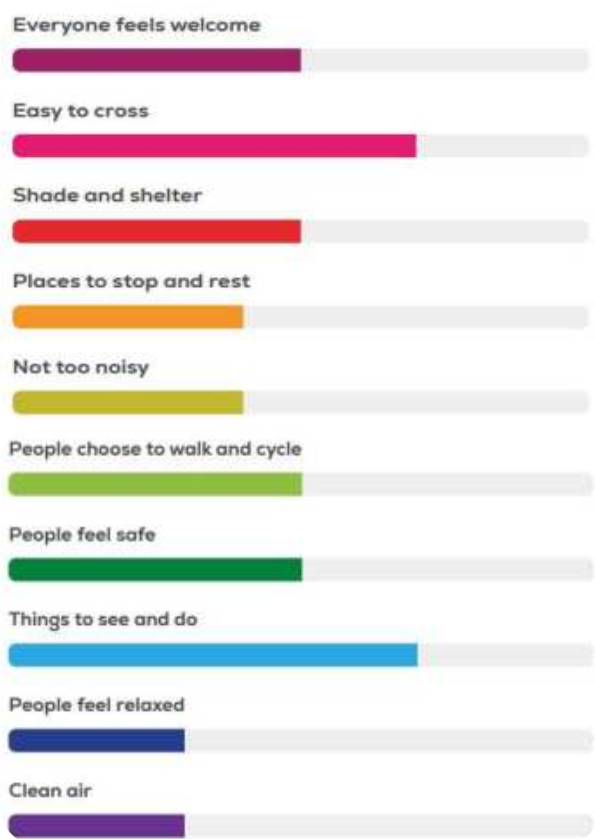
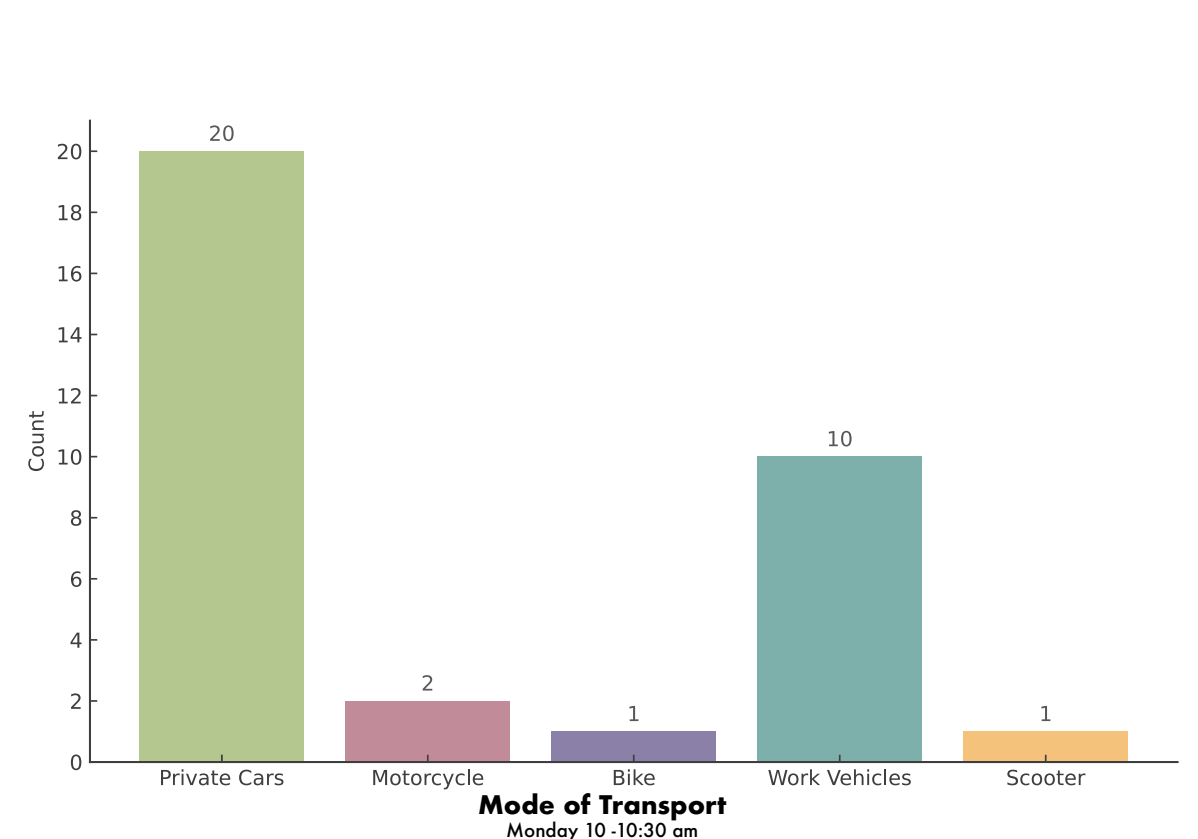


Figure 16: Public Life Survey
Note: Author’s own work



Figure 17: Motorised usage
Note: Author’s own work



Note: Author's own work

Strengths & Weaknesses



Figures 19: Opportunities & Constraints Map
Note: Author's own work

Opportunities & Constraints



Action Plan

Objectives



Pedestrian Priority:

Expand space for walking and social interaction.



Enhance Active Transport:

Improve Cycling and e-scooter Infrastructure.



Better Connectivity:

Integrate High Street into the wider district.



Comfort & Accessibility:

Provide seating, rest areas, and weather protection.



Green Spaces:

Introduce nature into the streetscape.



Vibrant Destination:

Position High Street as a key post-CRL hub.



Community Ownership & Activation

Build community ties. Offset potential loss of through-traffic.



Long-Term Vision:

Establish a pathway to permanent improvements.



Cost-Effective & Fast:

Implement changes quickly and affordably.

Key Moves

Prioritizing People & Active Transport

1

Creating a Welcoming & Green Streetscape

2

Activating the Street as a Destination

3

Strengthening Community Ownership & Engagement

4

Implementation Plan

Key Moves				Interventions		Stakeholders	Funding	Cost	Timeframe
1	2	3	4						
				1	Partner with local artists to paint tactical urbanism traffic calming measures.	Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Transport	Funded	\$	Immediate
				2	Create a dynamic pedestrian street with retractable bollards.	Local Businesses, Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Transport	Funded	\$\$	Short
				3	Undertake maintenance of existing paving.	Local Businesses, Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Transport	Funded	\$\$	Immediate
				4	Remove planters from the existing boardwalk and investigate a further extension.	Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Transport	Funded	\$	Short
				5	Add clear signage to improve legibility and navigation and integrate High Street into the wider district.	Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Transport	Funded	\$	Short
				6	Install bike parking.	Local Businesses, Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Transport	Funded	\$	Short
				7	Transform existing crossings into raised crossings.	Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Transport	Funded	\$	Immediate
				8	Investigate the possibility of creating a green wall on 27 High Street, viewable from Freyberg Square.	Local Businesses, Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board	Unfunded	\$	Medium
				9	Utilise existing loading zones for a boardwalk extension and planters to make Chan-cery Street a more welcoming and green pedestrian experience.	Local Businesses, Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Transport	Unfunded	\$\$	Medium
				10	Work with businesses to promote installing hanging baskets and planters alongside active frontages and balconies.	Local Businesses	Funded	\$	Medium
				11	Work with businesses to promote a consistent awning along the entire length of the High Street.	Local Businesses, Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board	Unfunded	\$\$	Long
				12	Facilitate the installation of fairy lights along associated laneways.	Waitemata Local Board, Vector	Funded	\$	Short
				13	Transform existing parking spaces into parklets with benches and trees.	Local Businesses, Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Transport	Funded	\$	Immediate
				14	Encourage community events at Freyberg Square and Ellen Melvin.	Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Council	Funded	\$	Immediate
				15	Hold live music nights at Freyberg Square.	Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board	Funded	\$	Immediate
				16	Make food trucks and mobile laundromats daily at night to promote activity and passive surveillance.	Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board	Funded	\$	Immediate
				17	Work with local artists to create a piece of interactive public art.	Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board	Funded	\$\$	Medium
				18	Promote the creation of a weekly Saturday market at Freyberg Square.	Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board	Funded	\$	Immediate
				19	Work with businesses to extend business hours.	Local Businesses, Heart of the Ctiy	Funded	\$	Short
				20	Establish a pop-up community management office.	Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Council	Funded	\$	Immediate
				21	Hold co-design workshops.	Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Council	Funded	\$	Short
				22	Work with local families to hold events where games can be painted on High Street during pedestrianised hours.	Waitemata Local Board, Auckland Transport, Local Families	Funded	\$	Short
				23	Hold movie nights at Freyberg Square.	Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board	Funded	\$	Immediate
				24	Create a notice board to monitor ongoing feedback.	Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board	Funded	\$	Immediate
				25	Promote early morning yoga sessions at Freyberg Square.	Heart of the Ctiy, Waitemata Local Board	Funded	\$	Immediate

Figure 20: Final Design Map

Note: Author’s own work

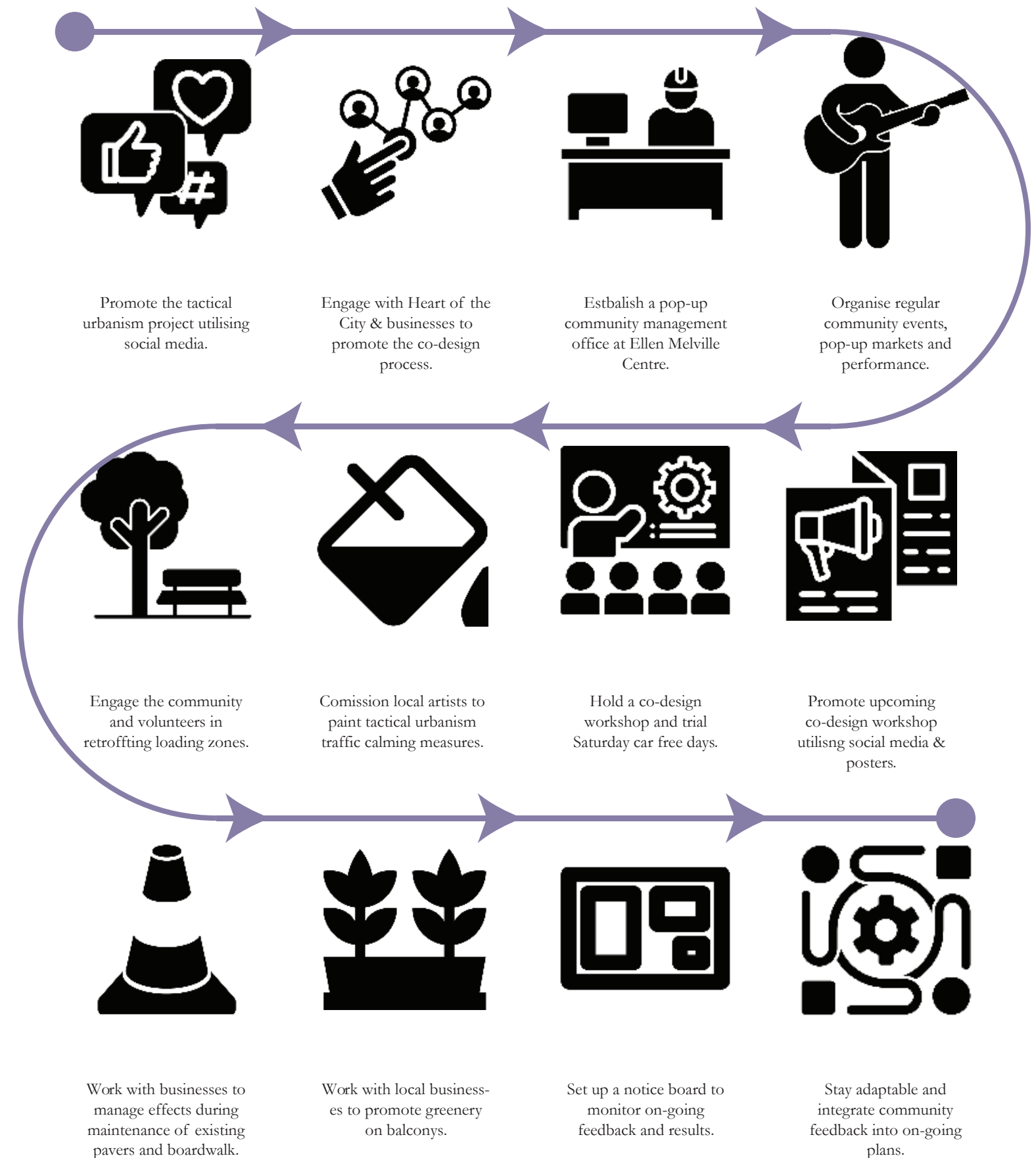


Action Plan

Stakeholders



Community Engagement



Action Plan

Final Proposal

The final design prioritises pedestrian movement along the Queen Street side of the street. Planters from the existing boardwalk have been removed to create more space for pedestrian movement. The bays currently used as parking or loading zones will be transformed into parklets, bringing areas to sit and rest and greenery into the streetscape. Bollards at the entrance of the High Street will pedestrianise the High Street most of the day. Bollards will be lowered twice daily for 30 minutes to facilitate the movement of goods into the site. Existing pavings will be maintained. Existing crossings will be raised. Painting along the road will liven up the street and serve a traffic-calming function. This permanent solution can be quickly and cheaply implemented, building on the 2019 pilot project to better provide pedestrian and green space to the High Street District, whilst avoiding lengthy and disruptive construction. Community-based interventions will build and maintain a social licence for the project, ensuring long-term success.

Action Plan

Evaluation & Monitoring

Monitoring will be conducted by establishing a notice board where users can leave comments about how the project works or how it could be improved. Strong engagement with businesses will also serve as a key way of gathering feedback. All feedback used will be utilised to adapt the plan to perform better. At the end of the project's life cycle, a formal evaluation will take place, and learnings from the project will be utilised to inform decisions about potential maintenance or transition to permanent infrastructure.

Figure 21: *Project Timeline*

Note: Author's own work

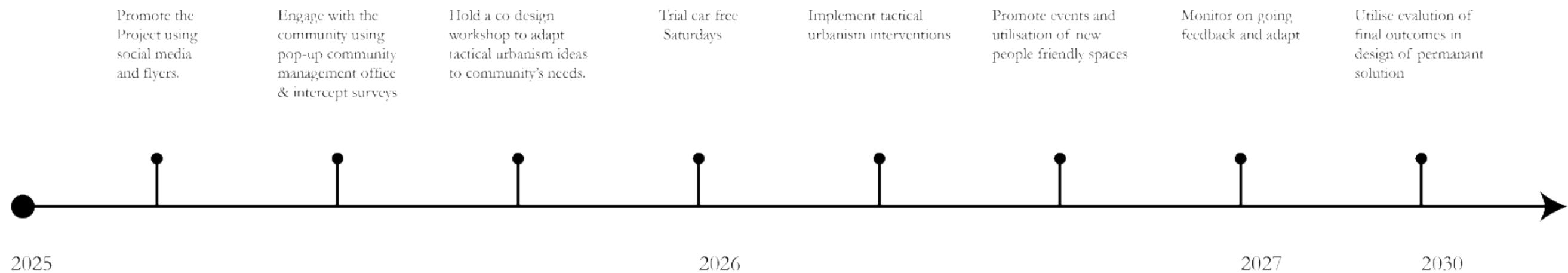


Figure 22: *Top down render*
Note: Author's own work



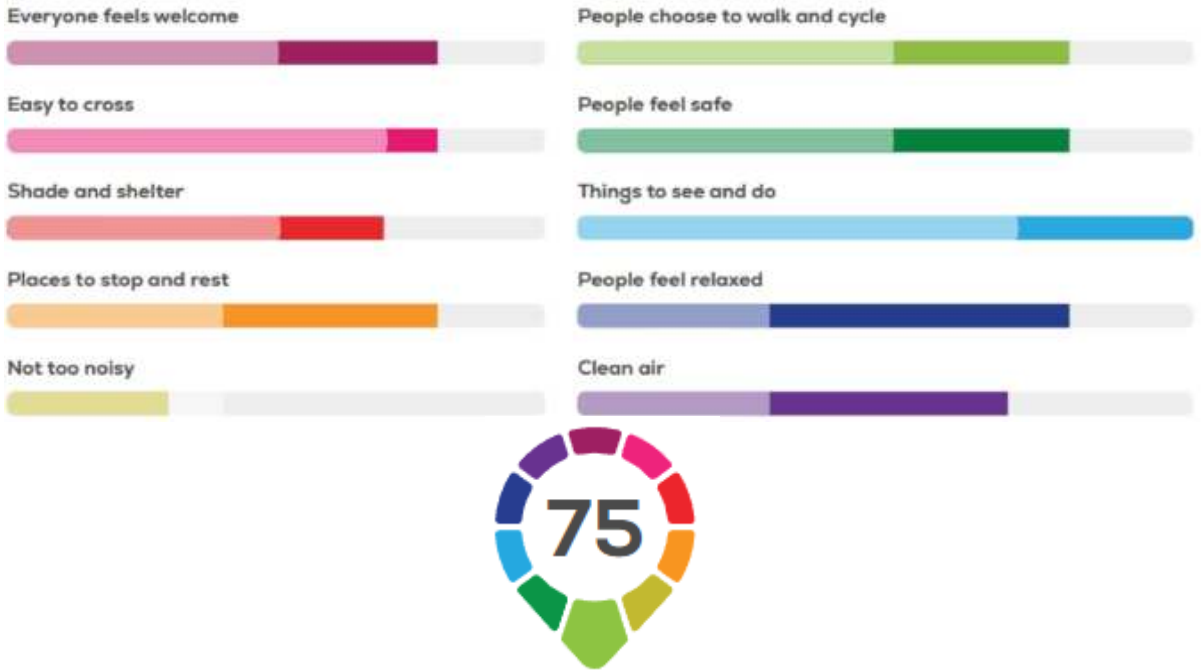
Figure 23: *Oblique render*
Note: Author's own work



Figure 24: *Final Cross-Section*
Note: Author's own work



Figure 25: *Final Healthy Streets Check*
Note: Author's own work



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