

HEART
OF THE CITY™
AUCKLAND

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

JULY 2021 TO JUNE 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout the year, the ripple-effect of COVID-19 continued to be felt in the city centre which required us to remain adaptable. Across our work, collaboration with businesses and key stakeholders played a pivotal role in delivering outcomes needed to attract visitation and support businesses.

A concerted effort with other Auckland industry leaders led to the development of the \$60 million Tāmaki Makaurau support package for businesses across Auckland. Alongside other business associations, we called on the government for decisive action on safety and collectively encouraged workers back to the office. Both challenges remain a high priority as we shift into the year ahead.

Initiatives were successfully delivered, adjusted to fit COVID-19 requirements when needed, including our Christmas programme and the inaugural City of Colour – a highlight for the year. These events were well attended and provided tangible evidence that people want to reconnect with the city centre – this was also validated through our annual perceptions survey. We used media extensively to draw attention to the city centre – enlisting support for our business community and raising the city’s profile to encourage visitation and lift confidence despite immediate challenges. Advocacy, along with investment in additional security, was focused on delivering an improved city environment.

We are firmly focused on what lies ahead. Heart of the City will keep working hard to support the city centre as we look towards a brighter future.

Steve Armitage, Interim Chief Executive, Heart of the City



STEVE ARMITAGE
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
HEART OF THE CITY

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

In uncertain circumstances, I am proud of the outcomes that the organisation has achieved for the year, which I believe has delivered value and benefit to those we represent.

This year the executive committee has overseen Heart of the City’s governance obligations, strategic direction and financial management, with another unqualified audit for the financial year. I’d like to thank our directors and our staff for their work over the past year, with particular acknowledgement to the valuable and long-standing contribution of Jason Copus who is stepping down after 15 years of service to our executive committee.

I would also like to acknowledge our partners and most of all, city centre businesses whose resilience and adaptability through a significantly challenging time has been inspiring.

At time of writing, we have started to see the numbers of people returning to city centre increasing – a positive sign for the year ahead.

Martin Snedden, Chair, Heart of the City Executive Committee



MARTIN SNEDDEN
CHAIR, HEART OF THE CITY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

STRATEGIC AND ANNUAL PRIORITIES

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- A unique 24/7 experience.
- A physically distinct Auckland city centre and waterfront.
- Easy and affordable to get in, out and around.
- A strong community that is welcoming, safe and clean.

These priorities have guided our work. With the economic situation remaining severe, our key goals for the city have been to maximise revenue, retain and attract business, investment, and customers, and maintain vibrancy and safety. These priorities remained our focus while supporting business amidst shifting COVID-19 alert levels and recovery periods.

Our annual priorities were framed around three work streams:

Recovery and Rebuild

Encouraging Auckland visitation and spend, and offset loss of international customers from domestic markets, supporting impacted business sectors and ensuring a vibrant environment that supports recovery and rebuild.

Transformation

Playing a key role in the ongoing development of the city centre, ensuring that the transformation meets the needs of business and creates a unique place for people.

Foundations

Ensuring a well-functioning, clean and safe city centre to underpin the return of people. Robust data and insights to inform our work.

This annual highlight summary showcases some of the ways in which we've delivered results over the reporting period.

RECOVERY AND REBUILD

FOSTERING A VIBRANT CITY THAT PEOPLE WANT TO VISIT AND SPEND TIME IN

We looked to increase visitors through established and new events, destination marketing and creative activations through and in between lockdowns and changing COVID-19 requirements. Iconic Heart of the City sponsored events like Christmas were successfully reworked, with initiatives like a large-scale light show in Te Komititanga encouraging people to explore the city centre safely. ‘The City Centre is Happening’ campaign attracted people into the city centre under Red. The campaign highlighted open-air shopping, events, outdoor dining

and the waterfront - generating 7.5 million digital impressions.

Collaboration with Auckland Council and other key city centre stakeholders was key to the success of the inaugural City of Colour event. It saw the city centre become a canvas for over 50 art and light installations, adding vibrancy to the cityscape and was promoted as an exciting new way to experience and explore the city centre’s precincts. We also worked alongside Auckland Council, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and others to deliver Matariki ki te Manawa. It was the second year that Heart of the City celebrated Māori New Year, with over 25 activations across the city centre.

In addition to key campaigns, our always-on social media channels performed well, with over 8 million

people reached across the year on Facebook, as well as stories in our emails, delivered to over 35,000 subscribers each week. This regular content played a key role in actively highlighting the variety of ways to connect with the city centre – even when we weren’t physically able to do so.

The city’s retail offering was supported by transforming 20 vacant sites with window installations, an initiative made possible with funding from Auckland Council and the City Centre Targeted Rate.

OUR RESULTS

Supporting community connections and a successful shopping environment for Christmas

750k

COMPLETED VIEWS OF THE CHRISTMAS VIDEO (+37% ON 2020)

46k

PEOPLE ATTENDED THE LIGHT SHOW IN TE KOMITITANGA

Increasing hospitality industry custom during Cheap & Cheerful Eats

+79%

INCREASE IN WEBSITE CLICKS TO CHEAP & CHEERFUL EATS CONTENT VS 2021

78k

PAGE VIEWS OF CHEAP & CHEERFUL EATS CONTENT

Facilitating a creative, vibrant city and encouraging visitation with City of Colour and Matariki ki te Manawa

+15%

INCREASE IN PEDESTRIAN COUNTS OVER CITY OF COLOUR WEEKENDS VS PREVIOUS THREE WEEKENDS

+38%

IN MATARIKI KI TE MANAWA WEBSITE VISITS VS 2021



RECOVERY AND REBUILD

SUPPORTING BUSINESS RECOVERY

We undertook extensive advocacy to support businesses impacted by COVID-19 and collaboration with key industry groups was vital to securing successful outcomes. This included the establishment of COVID-19 support payments in early 2022, as well as both the Activate and Reactivate Tāmaki Makaurau programmes.

With support from Auckland Council and funding from the City Centre Targeted Rate, we implemented an outdoor dining grant scheme. 57 businesses used the grant to enhance or create a new space for their customers.

Partnering with other central Auckland business associations, we encouraged workers back with 'Time to Make a Move' back to the office. In the first few weeks of Orange, we handed out hundreds of free lunch and coffee vouchers. Alongside 12 Wynyard Quarter corporates, we reconnected more than 2000 of their staff with hospitality venues in the area through The Great Wynyard Quarter Office Shout.

TRANSFORMATION

ENCOURAGING OPPORTUNITIES WHILE SUPPORTING THE NEEDS OF BUSINESS

The significant public sector transformation programme continued to be a priority. Throughout the year, we represented business and city centre needs through our role on the Auckland City Centre Advisory Board (ACCAB), direct representation and formal submissions.

We focused on ensuring that both strategy and projects – at all stages, including design and implementation – reflected the needs of business and improved the city centre. We continued to convey the need for better and more holistic planning through our advocacy and placed significant focus on the Queen Street, City Rail Link (CRL) and Midtown areas (Wellesley Street and Victoria Street), including pushing for improvements to loading and servicing in the area. We participated on working groups for Project Wave (Viaduct Cycling Enhancements Project) and an Auckland Transport led safety project for Nelson, Hobson and Fanshawe Streets – both allowing for good stakeholder contribution.

Guided by the principle that large scale projects should have financial support mechanisms in place before the project starts, we continued our efforts to secure financial relief for businesses severely impacted by the CRL. In September 2021, our extensive lobbying resulted in the establishment of the CRL Targeted Hardship Fund for C3, with the acknowledgement from government, that future projects of this scale should have this in place.

SUBMISSIONS

Bylaws: Signs, Freedom Camping, Road Activities

Projects: Wai Horotiu Queen Street, Wellesley Street, Te Hā Noa (Victoria Street), Project Wave

Policy: COVID-19 Legislation Bill, Auckland Council 10 Year Budget, Auckland Transport Parking Strategy, Auckland Unitary Plan Changes.

MMY HILFINGER



FOUNDATIONS

THE FUNDAMENTALS THAT KEEP THE CITY CENTRE SAFE AND CLEAN AND A GOOD ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE

A well-functioning, clean and safe city is vital to encourage the return of our customers and provides a positive environment for business.

We responded to growing concerns about safety from businesses and stakeholders with increased investment and activity. A six-week safety programme between May and June 2022 resulted in a decrease in issues and was very appreciated by businesses. CityWatch, StoreWatch and night-time safety patrols helped to monitor anti-social behaviour and escalated issues for action when needed. We also established a safety network across the city centre, and advocated strongly for the reestablishment of a city centre Police Station.

Simultaneously, we encouraged Auckland Transport to do a full audit and much needed maintenance to the city streetscape. This resulted in pavers being fixed along Queen and Fort Street and over 230 benches mended and varnished. In May 2022, there was a full city clean up – including graffiti and sticker removal by Auckland Council.

SAFETY

- The six-week safety programme increased reporting to Police which led to a number of arrests. It also provided useful information to Auckland Council and Auckland City Mission to support their outreach work.
- Safety co-ordination network meetings raised greater awareness of trends.
- Advocacy with other BIDs to central government requesting greater Police resourcing, and increased wrap around services.

The works featured in these images are all part of Wharewaka Huarua (House of Ahi), a full-time meeting house being constructed, designed by Toiy Te Kōwhiri. It is a significant cultural and architectural project, representing the future of the city's Māori community. The wharewaka's traditional form, some of which are shown here, represent the status of the Māori community. Māori is also a term used to describe the traditional and present-day Māori community, representing the future of the city's Māori community.

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE CITY CENTRE IS CHANGING

Performance metrics were key to supporting our focus and priorities. Using this data, we were able to address the evolving needs of businesses and ensure they were supported in a meaningful way.

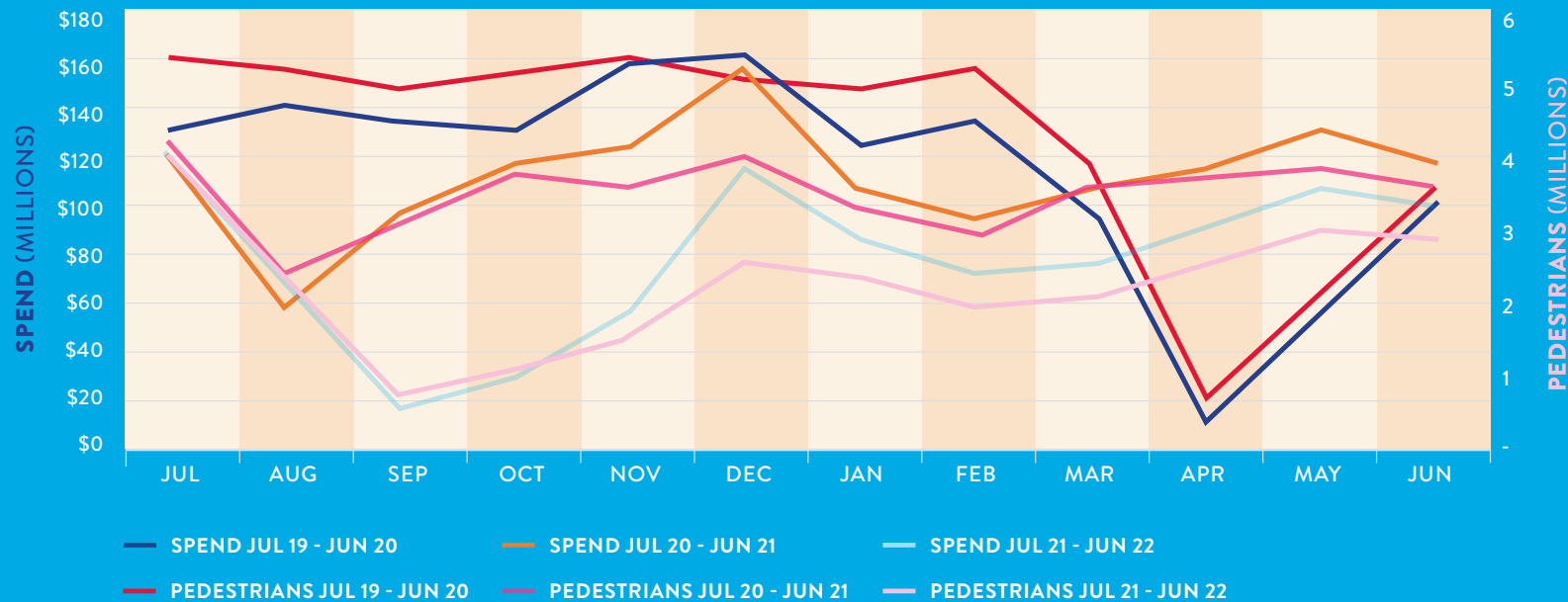
For example, our pedestrian counts showed the effectiveness of events and allowed us to track the impact of changing COVID-19 alert levels and

restrictions. In the accommodation sector, spending and bookings data revealed when both started to improve.

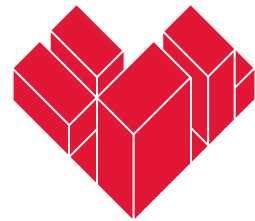
Perception research was also useful. It was used to understand what Aucklanders felt worked well in the city centre and which barriers to visitation became more entrenched. Our most recent highlights showed that there is an appetite to return to the city centre, which is a key data point for our future planning.

SPEND AND PEDESTRIANS IN AUCKLAND'S CITY CENTRE

JULY 2019 - JUNE 2022



Source: HOTC Pedestrian Counts: Marketview
 Spend data is monthly Marketview figures.
 Pedestrian numbers are from hourly pedestrian count data - with two K'Rd sites removed.



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