

# ACTIVATE AUCKLAND

Auckland  
Council

Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau



# AUCKLAND COUNCIL PARTNERS

Each of these organisations have a strategy for events and activations. All are regionwide except Activate Auckland which is Auckland city centre only.

Activate Auckland

Auckland Live

Auckland Tourism Events &  
Economic Development

Auckland Transport

Panuku Development Auckland

Regional Facilities Auckland

This document has been authored by the Auckland Design Office in collaboration with various placemaking activists, urbanists and opportunists across the Auckland Council family.

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# AREA OF SCOPE



 AUCKLAND CITY CENTRE TARGETED RATE AREA

"CITIES HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF PROVIDING SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY, ONLY BECAUSE, AND ONLY WHEN, THEY ARE CREATED BY EVERYBODY." - JANE JACOBS



# FOREWORD

MIKE LYDON

THE STREET PLANS COLLABORATIVE

What an incredible time it is to live in a city! Indeed, the majority of the world's population now dwells in an urban area; a trend that will only continue to accelerate into the 21st century. This new urban order is producing incredible economic and social opportunities for some, but also enormous inequality, mobility challenges, and environmental catastrophe for others. While the actual issues vary from city to city, one problem seems constant: the aligned professions of city-building are not responding fast enough to the problems and opportunities that we urban dwellers face today.

Citizens and city leaders alike have grown frustrated with the time and cost required for completing essential projects – from large-scale infrastructure to small-scale local improvements. Relying too heavily on what seem like endless meetings, prolonged studies, and expensive long-range master plans results in a type of civic apathy called “planning fatigue”. Our cities are now suffering because there is simply too much planning and not enough doing. So, what's to be done?

You may not be familiar with the term yet, but Tactical Urbanism is an approach to city building using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions intended to catalyse long-term change. In short, Tactical Urbanism offers ways for Citizens and Councils to respond to local challenges by utilizing small-scale, but highly visible demonstration projects that engage citizens and city leaders to uncover how best to design long-term infrastructure investments, while also delivering immediate benefits. The growing interest in, and global application of Tactical Urbanism has grown quickly because it taps into the latent demand for a more hands-on and experiential approach to neighbourhood development - one that takes planning off the computer screen and into the streets.

At Street Plans, we've helped citizens, community groups, developers, planning firms, mayors, city councils, and municipal departments initiate short-term, low-cost urban interventions. In June 2015 this included working with Auckland Council and Auckland Transport to introduce the principles of Tactical Urbanism and to assist with

the development of a responsive, place-based approach to the specific issues and opportunities facing Auckland's rapidly growing city centre.

In your hands or on your screen is Auckland's Activation Programme. This fresh approach to city-making utilizes the best practices of Public Place Activation and Tactical Urbanism. The programme provides a pathway for Council to not only engage its citizenry, but also empower Citizens to actively engage with their Council. Indeed, by providing a collaborative platform for community, business, and advocacy groups to develop and implement projects quickly, the Activate Auckland programme establishes a lighter, quicker, cheaper way to ameliorate the negative impacts associated with large-scale construction projects, reclaim the city's public realm for people, and continue asserting itself as one of the most liveable cities on the globe.

So, what are you waiting for? Read this document and get started today!

# PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

ACTIVATE AUCKLAND  
PLACE ACTIVATION, TACTICAL URBANISM  
#activateAKL

## INTRODUCTION

Over the next decade, 2016-2026, the face of Auckland's city centre will be transformed by over 12 billion dollars worth of public and private investment, creating new jobs and homes, making the city centre more attractive and boosting transport connections with other parts of Auckland.

Council strategies need to react quickly and creatively to the city's changing profile. The Activate Auckland programme was developed to deliver change using 'lighter, quicker, cheaper' methods of delivery and small, agile, responsive, low cost interventions that improve the quality of life for the citizens of Auckland city.

The two methods used are Place Activation and Tactical Urbanism. Combinations of the two assist with Disruption Mitigation as the city grows.

## PURPOSE

Activate Auckland represents a collection of complementary techniques and tools to deliver physical interventions and activation programming across the city centre.

- It supports citizens in being stewards and champions of their places.
- Helps create people-centric places through a mix of collaborative activations and design influenced interventions.
- Facilitates and incentivises inter-agency partnerships to enhance the city centre experience, providing opportunities to share ideas, resources and expertise, and in doing so leverage greater value.
- Establishes and embeds Tactical Urbanism approaches to transformation that are lighter, quicker, cheaper to inform and complement transformation projects.

- Supports a creative, proactive approach to disruption management during construction so the city centre remains a vital and enjoyable place to live, work, play, visit and do business.

## CONTEXT

Activate Auckland is guided by The Auckland Plan, the City Centre Masterplan, The Design Led City Strategy and associated frameworks, such as the Aotea and Downtown Frameworks and the Karangahape Road Plan.

This programme focuses on Auckland city centre which is the economic powerhouse of New Zealand, the main centre for the arts and creative industries, the major visitor destination and has a rapidly growing residential population. It is supported and largely funded by the city centre targeted rate. This rate is collected from both businesses and residents and may only be spent within the map area outlined on page 3.

## AUCKLAND PLAN

30 year vision and strategy for Auckland

## CITY CENTRE MASTERPLAN (CCMP)

Spacial plan for city centre

## ACTIVATE AUCKLAND

### PLACE ACTIVATION

#### Physical Interventions

Art, pole banners, digital media, installations, signage, performance

#### Digital Access

Digital media platforms, access to council media, providing access to data

#### Programming

Events, activities

#### Advocacy

Negotiating changes to Council regulations, streamlining processes to help enable partners

#### Facilitating/Mentoring

Creating tools/utilising platforms for sharing information. Capacity building.

#### Partnerships

### TACTICAL URBANISM

#### Interim Design Pilots

Trialling an idea before undertaking full investment, temporary short term interventions

#### Iterative Design

Informing collective behaviour change for the city. Small interventions that work towards a long term goal

## DISRUPTION MANAGEMENT

A combination of place activation and tactical urbanism.  
Tools are determined by the issues identified.

# PLACE ACTIVATION

Place Activation is about improving citizens' experience of place and their enjoyment and interaction in the public realm. Examples of place activation can include: digital media, art, performance, events, installations, workshops, pop-up dining and markets.

Effective place activation acknowledges citizens as stewards of public space, empowering them to identify and inform a placemaking approach that better fulfils their needs, preferences and patterns of activity.

It concentrates on the experiential and is strategically mindful of social, cultural and economic outcomes.



## ACTIVATION PROJECTS ADDRESS THE ECONOMY, ECOLOGY, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY OF A PLACE

Place Activation is about making spaces inclusive, memorable, unifying and innovative, balancing both the discrete and the needs of the enablers of the place.

It is also about connecting places and spaces in a way that is safe, aesthetic, enjoyable and legible. Place Activation is planning for people's diverse activities through both the design of the built form and the programming of the space.

Place Activation needs to be adaptable, flexible and achievable. It encompasses small-scale, short-term activities, improvements that can be started right away, long term, legacy and citywide activities.

The key to success is to first engage with the local community in a collaborative and collegial manner. Action/projects should only occur after genuine and representative stakeholder input. In other words, deliberative democracy in action.

Programming also includes careful consideration of existing assets; history, culture, built form, businesses, residents, biology, activities.

### OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate the development of specific place proposals in the context of existing place-based plans.
- To enable and empower the community in evolving and celebrating distinctive places, fostering a sense of community pride and supporting local economies.

### APPROACHES

- Physical interventions: Art, pole banners, digital media, installations, nightscaping, safety measures, media architecture.
- Events: Funding pilot events as platforms

for new or under-active spaces, enhancing existing events by extending them into the public realm.

- Advocacy: Negotiating changes to Council regulations, permitting, rules, navigation.
- Facilitation and Mentoring: Convening forums and workshops, assistance with project management, media planning, engaging speakers.
- Communication Channels: Offering a digital information portal, access to council media, publishing case studies and providing access to data.
- Investment: Attracting sponsorship, funding, resources and brokering cross-hybridisation, brand partnerships.

# TACTICAL URBANISM

Tactical Urbanism is a term credited to Street Plans Collaborative partners Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia and refers to the delivery of 'lighter, quicker, cheaper' physical interventions within the public realm such as parklets, cycleway projects, temporary play spaces and streetscape upgrades.

The approach is committed to delivering physical, often short term, place-based interventions that strategically align with the wider vision for the city centre, such as safe, liveable streets and pedestrian friendly public spaces.

By nature tactical urbanism projects are typically used to test/trial ideas; approaches to urban problems that may not have been tested before, and as such; measuring a project's success or failure is a key deliverable within this workstream.



## TACTICAL URBANISM PROJECTS ARE UNIQUE TO EACH SITE HOWEVER THEY SHOULD BE GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES.

### PRINCIPLES

- Interventions, big or small, must align with the strategic goals and outcomes of the Auckland City Centre City Maserplan (CCMP) and should explore opportunities to bring forward longterm projects to enable benefits to be realised in the short term.
- The CCMP highlights the city centre as a pedestrian priority area and projects need to be people focused and improve physical connectivity, personal safety, accessibility, social cohesion, aesthetics, and provide economic and innovation opportunities.
- Strong feedback measures are incorporated to measure public feedback and whether objectives have been met. And to provide definitive data on the successes, weaknesses and learnings from each unique project.

- No matter the project cost, the design process should be highly valued and it should fix problems. To achieve this, place based design interventions need to be developed to respond to the context of a given community or site. For example, there is very little benefit in providing places to sit if the real need is places to walk.
- Finally, projects need to be light, quick, and cheap. The lighter, quicker, cheaper approach to urban improvements offers citizens of the city a win-win scenario. If the project is successful, it often serves as the first step towards lasting change. If unsuccessful, then little time and money has been lost and the project can be reconsidered, removed, or replaced.

### APPROACHES

- Tack-on approach: When minor projects or renewals are underway, opportunities will be sought that enable added benefits and save on project costs.
- Partnering or co-funding or working alongside projects to gain greater benefits.
- Advance thinking: To collate potential projects, and inform future design briefs. Progress ways to deal with issues and package allied work streams.
- Pick up the tab: Many ideas get identified through various project and consultation processes however, often these do not meet a project's particular objectives and budget. Activate Auckland funds activities that should occur but simply lack resource.

# DISRUPTION MANAGEMENT

UTILISES ALL THE TOOLS OF TACTICAL  
URBANISM & PLACE ACTIVATION.

Auckland is facing both considerable and dynamic infrastructure changes. The key area of focus for this programme will be to offer beneficial solutions to lessen the impact of disruption caused by major construction works in the city centre. These disruptions are both public and private ie: Auckland Transport City Rail Link, Council street upgrades and the SKYCITY Convention Centre.

Construction projects can have negative effects on the financial sustainability of businesses and on the experience of the city for residents, workers and visitors.

Potential projects for the Activate Auckland programme will explore opportunities that keep the city thriving, to sustain economic viability, personal safety, pedestrian access and private and public transport legibility.

Conversely there are areas of the city centre that have no major transformation projects, but may be affected, and there will be simple interventions that address issues and see a step change towards the overall city centre vision.



# THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

THE ACTIVATE AUCKLAND PROGRAMME  
RELIES ON PEOPLE. COLLABORATION  
REQUIRES TRUST.

## PEOPLE

- Local champions and stewards of places.
- Auckland City Centre Advisory Board for advice from representatives of businesses, residents and tertiary institutions as well as financial support of the programme.
- Waitemata Local Board, the elected members and conduit for the community.
- Auckland Design Office programme managers and facilitators; the dedicated point of contact and conduit between Council and the community.
- The Activation and Tactical Urbanism Forum; to share learnings and coordinate activities.
- City Centre Integration PCG; senior management from across the organisation who can make difficult decisions.
- Subject matter experts both, staff and

consultants, to input and resolve ideas.

## MANDATE

- Auckland Plan, Auckland City Centre Masterplan, Design Led City Strategy and supporting documents to provide strategic direction.
- Direction from the Auckland City Centre Advisory Board.
- Allocated funding, predominantly from the Auckland City Centre Targeted Rate.

## LEARN AND SHARE

It is critical to learn by doing and then record, map, evaluate and refine the process for future programming ie:

- Establish new processes and pathways to get things done.

- Establish areas where pre-approvals/consents/products can be put in place to make it easier for others.
- Enable information gathering and sharing.
- Establish key forums to connect and share learnings.

# HOW CAN YOU OR YOUR GROUP GET INVOLVED?

## HAS YOUR COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED A NEED THEY WISH TO BE ADDRESSED?

WHO DOES IT TARGET?

DOES IT SOLVE A PROBLEM?

OR PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY?

IS IT A PILOT? EXPERIMENTAL?

IS THE ACTIVITY IN THE PUBLIC REALM?

IS IT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST?

IS THERE A PARTNER ON BOARD?

HAS RESEARCH BEEN DONE?

DOES IT SUPPORT DIVERSITY?

DOES IT SUPPORT EMERGING ARTISTS OR INNOVATORS?

## THEN TALK TO US

Activate Auckland offers advice, assets, infrastructure and funding support for activations across the Auckland city centre (see area of scope p.g 3). Public private partnerships are encouraged and support is made available to all; from citizens, businesses, community groups, the education sector and Council partners to corporations. There are no fixed criteria for people who wish to partner in Activate Auckland.

Projects need to be people focused and can include improved physical connectors, accessibility, aesthetics, personal safety, social cohesion, economic development, capacity building and innovation platforms.

## WHAT CANNOT BE SUPPORTED?

- Private activities; even in the public realm
- Projects requiring on-going funding
- Permanent artworks
- Permanent infrastructure

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# CASE STUDY

## BOOK BIKE PAHIKARA PUKAPUKA

### NEED

Auckland Central Library identified a need for an innovative outreach tool to connect with new residents, international students, children, young people, visitors and workers.

### PROBLEM

Over summer 2014-15 they successfully delivered a 'pop up' library in the central city but it was static and costly to run and resource.

### SOLUTION

The Book Bike which can roll into public spaces, support events, offer core library services and provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and information.

### OUTCOMES

Wide community engagement

Created a vehicle for community consultation

Public private partnerships between the library and local businesses

#spokeandword Media support: breakfast TV and social media

### PARTNERED WITH

Same Same But Different LGBTIQ writers festival, Waitemata Youth Collective, Q Theatre, Summer in the Square, Man Friday on High Street, International Women's Day Celebrations, The Pop-up Globe, Auckland Arts Festival's White Night and Auckland Writers Festival.

► Image: Laura Forest, Book Bike, Lorne Street

► Back cover image: Kate Van Der Drift, Men's Dapper Ride, High Street



