

Draft Concept and Key Moves for the
Square and Surrounding Area
Summary Feedback Report

Prepared for:



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1.0 Background

Regenerate Christchurch has been working with its partners - Christchurch City Council, the Crown, Ngāi Tahu and Environment Canterbury and other stakeholders to develop a regeneration strategy for Cathedral Square and the surrounding area. Specifically, the area between Kilmore Street to the north and Hereford Street to the south, and between Cambridge Terrace to the west and Manchester Street to the east.

In July 2017, Regenerate Christchurch proposed a draft concept with five key moves (refer Appendix 1) to “help stimulate investment and create a centre that showcases the very best of Christchurch” for public feedback. The draft concept was developed based on feedback obtained through ‘Share an Idea’, as well as more recent reports, market research, targeted engagement with property owners and community input.

Feedback on the draft concept and key moves closed in August 2017. Feedback was obtained in a number of ways, including online, by email, by post and via undertaking research with youth (primary and secondary school aged). This report summarises the various forms of collated feedback that were obtained (including the report on group and individual submissions, youth research [primary school and older youth], and feedback from various stakeholders including the RSA, Council, Christchurch Central City Business Association, Ōtākaro Ltd, and the Church Property Trustees).

2.0 Attitudes Towards the Draft Concept and Key Moves

Overall most people find the draft concept and key moves appealing – if not in their entirety at least partially. Many believe that regenerating the square will be good for the city economically, helping to revive businesses. Feedback on the draft concept can be divided into the intangible and the tangible.

People are very positive about the intangible aspects of regenerating the square – things like the square being a destination, having increased opportunities for socialising, performing arts, community cohesion, how they will feel in the square (happy, proud, entertained, connected to place and people), the ambience etc.

When it comes to the tangible aspects of the square people are positive towards the tangible aspects that could be easily modified (such as flexible seating within the square, greenery, water fountains, lighting etc). However, when it comes to the tangible aspects within the draft concept that would not be easily modified (i.e. the new buildings on the northern edge of the square) then people have reservations and concerns.

The concerns relate to the permanence of the proposed buildings, the impact the buildings will have on light (e.g. making the area too shady), on the size (too small for big events), on the view (blocking the view of the cathedral), creating a wind tunnel and changing the cruciform shape of the square (affecting its heritage value). There is also concern about the uses of the buildings (e.g. will they detract from other businesses in the surrounds or other regeneration efforts [such as the performing arts precinct and the arts centre]?).

2.1 Enduring Themes

There are some enduring themes in relation to feedback from Christchurch residents (i.e. enduring from the previous 'Share an Idea' consultation and other more recent engagement from Regenerate Christchurch), these are discussed below and overleaf:

- **Locals and tourists** – the square and its surrounds cannot be a place for tourists only, it also needs to cater to locals (via activities/events, places to eat, drink, shop etc).
- **Mix of old/new** – feedback has included that it is important to respect heritage buildings/statues and also, that it is good to see a mix of the old and new. Making a decision on the fate of the cathedral has been an enduring theme; now that a decision has been made people will undoubtedly be interested in timings and the impact of restoring the cathedral.
- **Seating** – the square needs to have spaces to sit (outdoor café areas as well as seating within the square).
- **Vibrancy** – people want an interesting city centre, this is expressed in terms of intangible things like being a social hub, a bustling place, and also in its aesthetic – being a colourful place, with street art and interesting light displays etc.
- **Safety** – people want safe spaces that are free from graffiti, vandalism, are well lit and well designed to ensure opportunistic crime does not occur.

- **Things to do** – people are looking for entertainment and activities – this includes a range of things from regular markets, cafes and bars, food stalls, buskers to watch, niche shops to visit, interactive activities to partake in (ranging from digital activities, games, things to climb on through to water features such as water jets) and seasonal events. People are very supportive of activities that will bring people to the square and its surrounds at all times of day (and they note that this increases safety in the area also).
- **Nature in the city** - people support having nature (greenery) in the city. There are mixed views over the type of plantings people want to see – some are keen on native plants that will encourage bird life back (and may be hardier in shady areas). Others are keen for European plants (out of a desire for colourful flowers, and in order to respect the areas' horticultural heritage). *(NB, it was noted that the cathedral garden should be in keeping with the cathedral and that the stony boulders/flax garden depicted in the draft concept were too informal for the space).* Plants are seen as something which softens a space, makes it more appealing and less of a 'grey concrete jungle.'
- **Water as a feature** – there is strong support for having water features including: decorative fountains, drinking fountains, and interactive water features such as water jets that children can run through. Water is seen as something that can engage young people (by giving them something to play with). People had some concerns in relation to water features – they did not want to see water being wasted, or water features being put in that posed a drowning risk for young children. Additionally, there was feedback that any water feature would need to be well maintained to make sure it was clean, free of rubbish and graffiti.
- **Urban living** – people are supportive of bringing urban living closer to the centre (e.g. suggestions such as providing housing on upper floors of buildings). Urban living brings life to a centre (via the 'hustle and bustle' of spaces that are used), economic value, and it's thought to make areas safer. It is recognised that urban living requires infrastructure (supermarkets, schools, doctors, place to walk dogs etc).
- **Don't ignore practicalities** - people want seating, toilets, rubbish bins, drinking fountains, lighting, designs that maximise sun/light and minimise wind, available Wi-Fi, ATM machines etc.
- **Maintenance** - in order to be an attractive destination, the square and surrounds must be well maintained, offering clean facilities, and well looked after spaces (e.g. free of vandalism, rubbish and graffiti). Maintaining spaces is mentioned quite often. People want to see a visible commitment to 'proactive maintenance' (for example, by using materials that are easy to restore after vandalism and undertaking 'proper planting' to ensure that any planting is sustainable). The commitment may also take the form of providing assurances throughout the design process that things will be looked after.
- **Upgrade streets and lanes** - people like the idea of the streets and laneways being upgraded to improve accessibility to the centre and to provide interesting spaces in their own right. *(NB whilst noting that the safety and mobility of people are key design considerations for any modifications).*

- **Improved connectivity** – people want a city that is pedestrian and cycle friendly, and one that also has good public transport networks.

2.2 Emerging Themes

Some themes emerged in response to the draft concept and key themes:

- **Reluctance to have permanent buildings on northern edge of square**, because of concerns that:
 - it would change the geometry of the square and block views
 - dividing the space into smaller ones would affect the ability to host events and impact the flexibility of the space
 - it would shade large parts of square
 - new buildings/development could negatively impact on existing development space and other regeneration areas of focus (e.g. the arts centre, and the performing arts precinct)
 - there is not enough evidence that new buildings were needed given existing unused buildings
 - additionally, there is uncertainty about what the buildings would be used for.

It was felt there was a need for a greater understanding of the impact on the square of the proposed buildings. Suggestions were also made about having non-permanent structures in the space.

- **Risks associated with poor quality development** - people feeling concerned that poor quality development could set regeneration efforts back. It was suggested that efforts should focus on ensuring existing buildings are of high quality and work together well.
- **Development occurring without the population to support it** – for example, concerns about too many laneways being developed without the population to support them, and cautioning that central Christchurch needs to avoid under-tenanted stretches (which would lend themselves to vandalism and graffiti). There were also concerns about creating new markets that might detract from existing ones.

2.3 Youth Specific Feedback

This section considers 'youth specific feedback' separately from the wider feedback already noted. (NB Youth is a broad term in this context including both primary school aged children, high school children and those aged XX [check with Daisy re age of those in Youth Space Audit from the ChCh Youth Council]).

Overall, young people appear more supportive of the whole draft concept and key moves. Intangible aspects they were positive about included:

- Having multiuse spaces – encourages more people to use them
- The value of having a mix of influences in order to be welcoming to a wider range of people
- Being able to *experience* nature in the city (see greenery, smell flowers and hear nature [birds])
- Happy people in the square (laughing, fun, relaxed, positive, proud of square, safe, socialising)
- Access to (free) activities (things to do e.g. watch music/ live performances, buskers, shows put on by schools, games, Wi-Fi, markets etc)
- They like the idea of a 'youth space' (where you can be loud, congregate, skateboard, be active), but want everywhere to be 'youth friendly' (NB they didn't see anything in the draft plan that they identified made something specifically a 'youth space'¹)
- They want the space to support healthy lives (e.g. encourage activity including active transport, be smokefree, have healthy eating options etc)
- They want the space to be inclusive – for all stages, ages and cultures
- Additionally, they'd like the centre to be dog friendly (assuming owners pick up dog waste and dogs are well behaved).

Tangible aspects they were positive about included:

- Seating – they like the idea of moveable furniture (bean bags, lounge chairs)
- Decorative aspects that add vibrancy and interest such as water fountains, colour (e.g. lighting displays projected onto buildings, street art, bright lights), plants, sculptures and statues – including those you could climb on
- Different places to get food (and different types of food)
- New library is exciting (they note there is a need to think about space around library as this will be finishing soon)
- Buildings on the square – although were positive about this for an 'intangible' reason – specifically, that buildings in the square might provide employment opportunities for young people.
- They want cafes and shops (and caution that these should be selected with purpose to ensure they are boutique, funky, unique, 'destination' shops)
- Like the idea of a mix of styles – new and heritage (e.g. mixing street art, cultural art, and historic statues together²).

¹ They noted that if a specific youth space was being designed they would want to design it themselves.

² On the topic of historic statues, the RSA have provided feedback to Regenerate Christchurch that they would like the Christchurch Citizens' War Memorial moved to Cranmer Square. There are a number of reasons for this including that the proposed changes to the square reduce its size, Cranmer Square is on the tourist tram route, and Cranmer Square has been used successfully for the last six years as a venue for ANZAC day services.

Comments in relation to accessibility were mixed. They are keen for more trams³, and they like the idea of pedestrian/cycle/skate board friendly spaces but are not sure how the space would be accessible for everyone. They had questions about how people will get to the space and how pick up/drop offs work (although they did note there are car parks nearby, and a bus exchange not far away). Comments were also made about not wanting traffic in the square and that the road through or around the square seems unsafe.

There were concerns raised about the area in front of the library being earmarked as a 'youth space', their concerns were threefold. Firstly, as there are taxis and vehicles traveling to the Novotel they did not think the area was a safe space. Secondly, given they want somewhere they can hang out in groups and be loud they thought the clientele at the Novotel would get annoyed with them. Thirdly, they didn't want to put off others who might want to use the library, and felt like the library should be for everyone, including the space in front.

Criticisms of the draft plan included wanting to see different cultures incorporated into plan, and being surprised by a lack of Māori influence in the plan. *(NB in the 'Share an idea' consultation references were made to incorporating Māori influence in designs [e.g. having bilingual signage and art]).*

2.4 Ideas to be Explored Further and Better Understood

- **New buildings on the Northern edge of the square** – as the feedback notes there is reluctance to have permanent buildings in the square and a lack of clarity about the potential impact of buildings and also the uses of the buildings.
- **Connectivity** - the feedback indicates that there is uncertainty about how transport in and around the square will work. People have questions about pedestrian only spaces and vehicle access to and around the square (e.g. for hotel guests, service deliveries, taxis etc) and parking. Even where there is strong support for increasing pedestrian and cyclist friendliness, further information on vehicle movement is wanted. This is because cars are perceived as necessary for businesses (e.g. encouraging shoppers, those from the suburbs etc), for safety (e.g. nearby taxis for getting home in the evening after going to bars), and for supporting mobility (e.g. amongst the elderly and those who have a disability).

People also want to know about access to parking (e.g. where will people visiting the cathedral park?) and the cost of parking. Feedback also raised questions about increasing the use of the tram and improving links to public transport.

- **Incorporating Māori history and stories** - this was something that was in the 'share an idea' consultation, and mentioned by youth as well as the Council – need to consult with local iwi and other Māori living in the area on this.

³ This was also a theme in the 'Share an idea' consultation.

3.0 Values within Feedback

The following values (i.e. principles representing what people want to see/have) are evident in the feedback.

Inclusivity

- The square is for all ages, stages and cultures
- There is something for everyone to do in the square (NB not necessarily all at once, but at different times of day or at different scheduled events)
- Buildings on/around the square should have uses that appeal to a wide range of people
- The square has a mix of old and new styles (it acknowledges the past and it looks to the future)
- The square is a welcoming place (one that is safe, representative of those who visit, has seating, reasons to visit etc).

Sustainability

- Environmentally friendly (e.g. has green spaces, encourages birdlife, enables recycling, caring for the environment)
- Recycling building materials in the rebuild (e.g. tiles) - as part of being environmentally sustainable and fiscally responsible.
- Whatever is there (plants, water, buildings, facilities etc) is able to be looked after and well maintained
- Businesses will be supported to be sustainable (e.g. may have rent subsidies whilst establishing themselves).

Connectivity

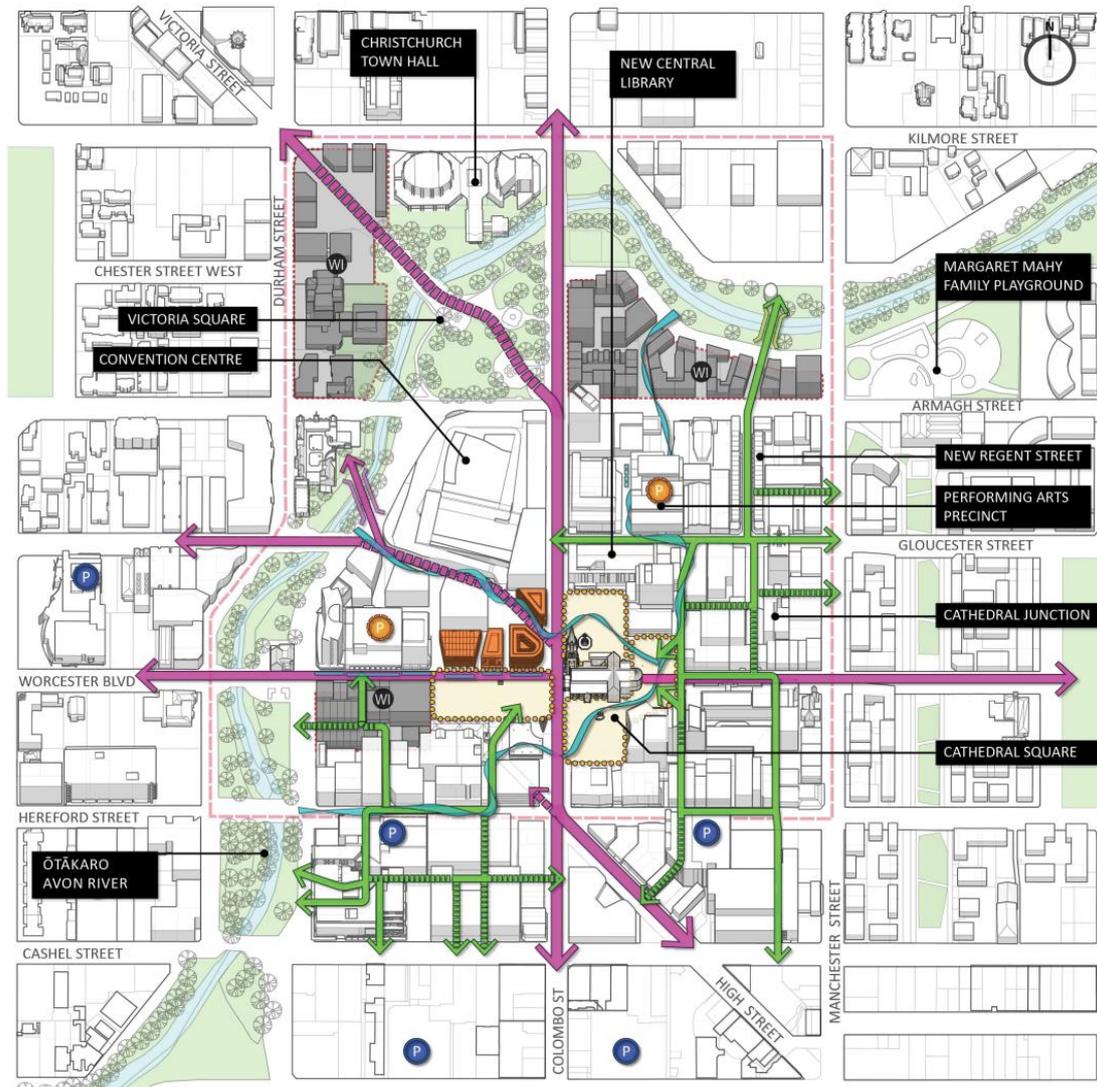
- The square is the heart of the city, it connects:
 - people to the city (the place and its businesses/activities)
 - people to each other (in person and digitally via Wi-Fi)
 - people to nature (via greenery and water features)
 - people to culture and heritage
 - people to the future
 - people in Christchurch to the rest of the world (through tourism and products)
- The square is accessible (e.g. easy to get to, easy to get around). This includes being accessible for those who are in wheelchairs, who have pushchairs/buggies or who are elderly.

Inspiring

- The square is seen as a destination
- The square is interesting and vibrant (e.g. has street art, street performers, lighting displays, boutique, 'funky' niche shops, colourful buildings/plantings)
- It is attractive to businesses and consumers alike.
- The square is not static (e.g. it has seasonal events, it has a variety of activities, it has moveable seating, different markets/places to eat, changing lighting)

APPENDIX 1 – Proposed Key Moves (July 2017)

DRAFT CONCEPT AND KEY MOVES



KEY MOVE 1
Reshaping the Square to create more lively public spaces.



KEY MOVE 2
Framing the Square with structures and buildings that can stimulate the arts, creative enterprises, knowledge and education.



KEY MOVE 3
Improving connectivity to, through and around the area.



KEY MOVE 4
Upgrading the streets and lanes between hubs of activity.



KEY MOVE 5
Integrating water and the indigenous ecosystem into the streets and public spaces.



WIDER INITIATIVES



EXISTING/ COMMITTED OFF STREET CAR PARKING



POTENTIAL OFF STREET CAR PARKING