





07

CITY TO THE VILLAGES

*Connecting the City
and the Fringe*





VISION

OUR 2032 VISION IS THAT:

- The walking and cycling journey between the city centre and its inner suburbs is a pleasure, not a chore
- Gateways into the city centre are celebrated
- Leafy boulevards link urban villages with the city centre and with each other
- Generous pedestrian and cycle connections cross the motorway, taking advantage of high views
- Convenient and frequent bus, ferry and possible future light rail services connect the city centre and its inner suburbs
- Local streets intercept and cross the motorway at various points and celebrate its form
- Native species dominate plantings in streets and gateways.

BACKGROUND

The central motorway junction, known as spaghetti junction, signalled the start of a new freedom of movement to the north and south of the city, and then the west and east. When work began in the 1950s, the emphasis was on getting through and past the city. This has been at the expense of the city centre’s connections with the historic urban villages on its edge at the city fringe. These villages are vital to the city centre, as they house a large residential population.

Despite this, there are walking routes into the city from city fringe suburbs like Parnell, Ponsonby, Newmarket and Grafton. However, these routes are typically narrow strips alongside several lanes of traffic, and the walking experience can be unpleasant and confusing.

The challenge is to make this journey more pleasant and also capitalise on the motorway network. Beautifying and softening the motorway infrastructure will allow us to see its viaducts, trenches and sweeping bridges as vantage points for viewing our city, volcanic cones and harbour.

Recent improvements have already made a difference: planting beside the motorway, new motorway structures, and sculptural elements. Work is also under way to extend the off-road pedestrian/cycleway at Grafton Gully through spaghetti junction and connect it to the city centre at Symonds Street, Wellesley Street and Beach Road.

Walkability is just one aspect of the city to village connection. Auckland Transport will continue to work on providing more convenient and frequent bus services, and will investigate the possible use of light rail in the city centre. The Council and Auckland Transport will continue a programme of improving footpaths and providing more dedicated cycle infrastructure, trees, and better street lighting.

The physical extent of the city centre appears to stop at the waterfront and Devonport; the historic bridgehead to the

North Shore communities seems to be a different world. In reality it is similar to the urban villages of Parnell and Ponsonby in character, socio-economic profile and distance from the city. It is only two kilometres away, a 15-minute ferry journey, which is no more of a barrier than the motorway system. The masterplan sees Devonport as part of the city fringe, and the harbour as being at the heart of the city centre, a blue central park. Ferry services could be further enhanced, and the wharf buildings on both sides of the harbour have considerable scope for improvement so they can become destinations, rather than simply transit areas.

OUTCOME SCORECARD

✓	SO1 International Destination
	SO2 A Globally Significant Centre for Business
✓	SO3 Meeting the Needs of its Residential Population
✓	SO4 Culturally Rich and Creative
✓	SO5 An Exemplar of Urban Living
✓	SO6 Integrated Regional Transport System
✓	SO7 Walkable and Accessible City
✓	SO8 Exceptional Natural Environment and Leading Environmental Performer
	SO9 World-Leading Centre for Higher Education, Research and Innovation

GATEWAYS

The motorway network that circles the city centre is vital for vehicle movement. The motorway is critical to many of the other transformational moves in this masterplan, as it brings people and goods to and from the city centre and relieves the city centre of much cross-town traffic. However, it is often regarded as visually unattractive and an imposition on the historic pattern of the city centre. Running mainly along the natural gully system, it strongly defines the city centre, giving it a citadel-like quality.

Perhaps we should consider celebrating the motorway and its overbridges as dramatic breaks in the general urban form. Some of the vantage points can be opened up to grand effect, while others can be concealed by development over the motorway.

BEAUTIFYING BRIDGES

Of the 14 bridges that cross the motorway network, the Symonds Street and Upper Queen Street bridges have been prioritised for beautification. They have been chosen as they connect the city centre to the proposed Newton City Rail Link growth node. They are currently austere, car-dominated environments. The level of intervention will be determined following detailed investigation, but could involve introducing artwork, pedestrian and accent lighting, new floorscapes and landscaping. Additionally, work can start on providing pedestrian and cycle access across the Wellesley Street bridge to Grafton Road.

UPPER QUEEN STREET

169



► EXISTING



► POTENTIAL

PUTTING A LID ON IT

PARTS OF THE MOTORWAY NETWORK ARE EITHER SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS TO CROSS-CITY MOVEMENT OR UNEXPLOITED DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, AND NEW OVERBRIDGES OR OVER-DEVELOPMENT CAN RESPOND TO THIS.

Parts of the motorway network are either significant barriers to cross-city movement or unexploited development opportunities, and new overbridges or over-development can respond to this.

Movement between the Auckland Domain and Albert Park is inhibited by the topographical barrier of Grafton Gully and State Highway 16. Modest enhancement of the crossing points at Grafton Road, Alten Road and Wellesley Street can reduce this. In the long term, one option is to develop an expansive land bridge to create a better pedestrian connection between the sites. There are also opportunities for new recreational space, such as tennis courts and five-a-side pitches.

Development could occur over parts of the motorway. An example is the west-bound State Highway 16 as it runs alongside Alex Evans Street between the Upper Queen Street bridge and the Symonds Street bridge. This would use the large retaining structure that already separates this stretch of motorway from State Highway 1. Such an intervention would require significant development and one or more landmark buildings to offset the cost and potential disruption.



THE GREEN RAMP – SPAGHETTI VERDE

The redundant off-ramp (the old Nelson Street off-ramp) at the central motorway junction, or spaghetti junction, leading to upper Newton Road provides an opportunity for a bold yet low-cost intervention. The off-ramp could be repurposed as a linear park, much like the High Line in New York or the Promenade Plantée in Paris.

<http://www.thehighline.org/>,

<http://www.aviewoncities.com/paris/promenadeplantee.htm>.

Such a linear park could connect into the wider pedestrian and cycle network. This could be achieved by creating links off the Karangahape Road bridge or surrounding local roads such as South Street, Day Street, Galatos Street or Canada Street. The area could house art installations, or it could become a grand art intervention itself, with limited public access. The New Zealand Transport Agency is the owner of the ramp, and Auckland Council and Auckland Transport will lead the project.





CONNECTING THE URBAN VILLAGES

AN EXTENSIVE NETWORK OF ROUTES, (STREETS, FERRY CONNECTIONS) LINKS THE CITY CENTRE TO THE URBAN VILLAGES IN THE CITY FRINGE. HOWEVER, THE ROUTES ARE OFTEN POOR QUALITY; THE STREETS ARE VEHICLE-DOMINATED AND THE FERRIES INFREQUENT.

PARNELL

Parnell is close to the city centre, yet its walking and cycling connections into the city centre are not good. The motorway system delivers high vehicle numbers onto Stanley Street from Grafton Gully. Auckland Transport is developing a new rail station to service Parnell, the Auckland War Memorial Museum and the Auckland Domain. The station's site should encourage development between Parnell and the city centre, extending the mixed-use,

vibrant character of Parnell through the former Carlaw Park site towards the city centre. This will also create a much more pedestrian-friendly environment, drawing people from the university and the eastern side of the city centre to the new Parnell station and Parnell village itself. The new station would create a strong stimulus for improved cross-Grafton Gully connections.



PONSONBY

The 'iconic' heritage suburb of Ponsonby with its many restaurants, cafés, art galleries and up-market shops running along the ridge line of Ponsonby and residential areas either side of it, is less than two kilometres west of the city centre. Prior to the construction of the SH1 Northern Motorway the area linked seamlessly into the city centre via many historic routes. However, many were severed with its construction.

It is important that those remaining connections are as good as they can be. Hopetoun Street, in particular, would benefit from enhancements such as a walking route to Ponsonby. Other development opportunities in the area include the proposals for the redevelopment of the

vacant and excavated site of the former DYC Vinegar Factory on Williamson Avenue, Pollen Street and Crummer Road. The mixed-use proposal comprising a supermarket, retail, offices and underground car parking alongside a residential neighbourhood arranged around small lanes, will make a valuable contribution to quality compact development in Auckland.

College Hill, on the east-west axis of the Green Link from the Domain to Victoria Park leading to the Three Lamps, should also be considered for enhancement.

DEVONPORT

The first impression ferry passengers, many of them tourists, have of Devonport is its wharf. Together with the space in front of it (Marine Square), it is a transport hub and interchange for ferries and buses. The area has been neglected over the years and is under-used.

A proposed upgrade of Marine Square creates a triangular boardwalk extending along the shoreline to the side of the wharf’s first shed. This will form a new public space and offer a direct path from the wharf to Victoria Road. The more attractive setting is likely to encourage a high level of investment in the refurbishment of the wharf buildings and the ferry terminal.

A high-quality, public/private sector gateway development on the Devonport and Victoria wharves could take advantage of the new public spaces and attractive views to the Waitematā Harbour, city centre and Harbour Bridge. The project is a priority for the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board. About \$10 million of council and Auckland Transport funding is

already identified for the Marine Square enhancement, boardwalk and wharf building upgrade.

Beyond the wharves, Devonport has a great deal to offer as a city-fringe urban village, visitor destination and working hub, including the Navy dockyard and its facilities.

Continued improvement of the ferry service to Devonport, together with its possible expansion to other coastal nodes on the Waitematā and in the Hauraki Gulf, would significantly strengthen the connection of this part of the city fringe to the centre.

The proposed additional harbour crossing would further strengthen connectivity to the north, and reduced traffic volumes on the Harbour Bridge would allow for the introduction of a cycleway and improved public transport on the Harbour Bridge, as volumes of traffic reduce.

