

High Street Improvements Project

Help shape High Street's future

Information pack for engagement: 21 July 2025 – 18 August 2025

Auckland Council, Auckland Urban Development Office

akhaveyoursay.nz/HighStreet



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How to read this document

This information pack is designed to help you understand what's happening on High Street, the three design ideas being explored for its future and how to share your thoughts.

What's inside

- Background on the project
- The nine **community aspirations** that shaped the design ideas
- **Three design ideas** for we're exploring for High Street's future - each with a concept plan, artist sketches, a summary of how the street would work and what construction could involve
- **Managing vehicles** at different times of day – including timed access
- **Ways to have your say** and help shape High Street's future

What happens next

You can have your say from **Monday 21 July to Monday 18 August 2025.**

The information we gather from the community will be independently reviewed and will help shape a preferred future for High Street.

We'll come back later this year to share what we heard and what happens next.

The final recommendation to elected members will be informed by what we hear from across the community of businesses, residents and visitors to High Street.



Background

High Street Improvement Project

High Street is one of the busiest laneways in the city centre. It's a place people come to shop, dine, commute and meet friends. It also connects into a growing network of upgraded laneways like O'Connell Street, Jean Batten Place and Freyberg Place.

In 2020, we made some improvements to make the street more welcoming and easier to get around. These updates have helped shape how people use High Street today.

Now, as we plan for more people to live, work and visit the city centre, we're building on that foundation to plan for High Street's future.

This project is part of a wider transformation happening across midtown and supports the City Centre Masterplan vision of a vibrant, connected and people-focussed city centre.

This is our chance to give High Street the care it deserves and reinforce its role in a growing, changing city centre.

How it's funded

This project is funded from the [city centre targeted rate \(CCTR\)](#), a rate paid by city centre commercial and residential property owners to help pay for improvements in the area and implement the [City Centre Masterplan](#), with around \$25 million set aside for High Street.

The final investment will be shaped by the feedback we receive. Any budget not used for this project will go back into the CCTR fund, to be invested in other improvements in the city centre.

Exploring ideas for High Street's future

We're exploring three design ideas for High Street's future, shaped by what we heard from the community in 2024.

Each idea:

- responds to the community aspirations - what we've heard from businesses, residents and visitors to High Street
- reflects different ways the street could support how people live, move, shop, dine and connect
- presents a different level of change – from a lighter upgrade to a larger transformation
- varies in cost and approach to construction

We want to understand:

- How well the three ideas support the community aspirations
- What works well and what needs more thought
- How well each idea balances the community aspirations, construction impacts and cost

Your feedback at this stage will help us get the foundations right and help guide the next steps in the design process.

Together, we're aiming to identify the preferred future for High Street: one that supports the community aspirations, protects what makes the street unique, and creates a vibrant street that functions well and meets everyday needs.

Have your say

Engagement is open from
Monday 21 July to Monday 18 August 2025

- Complete an online or paper feedback form at akhaveyoursay.nz/HighStreet
- Participate in a 45-minute conversation or interview email us at highst@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz to book.
- Come talk to us in person at one of our local drop-in sessions at the Ellen Melville Centre between 3-15 August.

Scan the QR code below to have your say,
or visit akhaveyoursay.nz/HighStreet



Contact us

If you would like to get in touch with the project team,
please email highst@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Stay updated

To sign up to receive project updates, scan the QR code below,
or visit akhaveyoursay.nz/HighStreet



Partnering with mana whenua

We're working in partnership with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, Te Ākitai Waiohūa and Ngāti Te Ata Waiohūa. They have provided a matawhānui (broad vision) and four uara (values) for the project that have informed the ideation process and continue to guide the project's approach.

Matawhānui (broad vision)

Te pai me te whai rawa - enabling wellbeing and prosperity for High Street as part of the city centre.

Recognise the uniqueness of High Street by drawing together its many pasts and futures to create a place for life and community to prosper at the heart of our city.

Uara (values)

Tirotiro ki Mua – meeting the future

Recognise the challenges facing us and respond in ways by which we demonstrate our accountability to future generations through innovative, flexible and resilient solutions.

Tiaki Waitematā Kupenga Rau – elevate the mana and mauri of our collective taonga, Waitematā Kupenga Rau

Prioritise the wellbeing of the Waitematā harbour.

Te Kānohi Kītea – enduring presence of tangata whenua

Ensure the mana, tikanga and mauri of tangata whenua is authentic and is present.

He Wāhi mō te katoa – a place open and inviting to all

Create high quality and humane spaces for all to dwell, spell and experience, which encourage:

- the 'soft echo of shared humanity' to be present,
- a 'supported' democratic space available for our diverse communities to gather, celebrate and enjoy.

Community aspirations

Between July and October 2024, **we heard nine aspirations** for High Street's future – through conversations with local businesses, residents and visitors – and surveys with the wider public.

These aspirations have **shaped the design ideas** we're sharing and continue to guide the project.



Vibrant street level

You want High Street to feel alive, with buzzing shops, quality places to eat, drink and shop.



Better walking experience

You want it to be easier and safer to walk, with better footpaths and more space for people.



Space for community

You want space to come together – whether it's for events, markets or somewhere to sit and enjoy the city.



Well-maintained

You want the street to be looked after, clean and tidy, with greenery that shows people care about it.



Safe and welcoming

You want the street to feel safe, day or night, with a welcoming vibe and a good balance between people and vehicles.



Unique and memorable character

You want the street to hold its character, a place that feels familiar and connected to the stories, shops and spots you remember.



Quirky, urban vibe

You want it to stay unique, not polished or generic, but quirky, with interesting, small, independent businesses and a creative energy.



Ease of getting to/from

You want the street to work well, with access for daily operations like deliveries and waste collection, and easy for people to reach.



Well connected

You want it to feel connected, part of a bigger network of laneways and spaces that make it easy and enjoyable to explore the city.



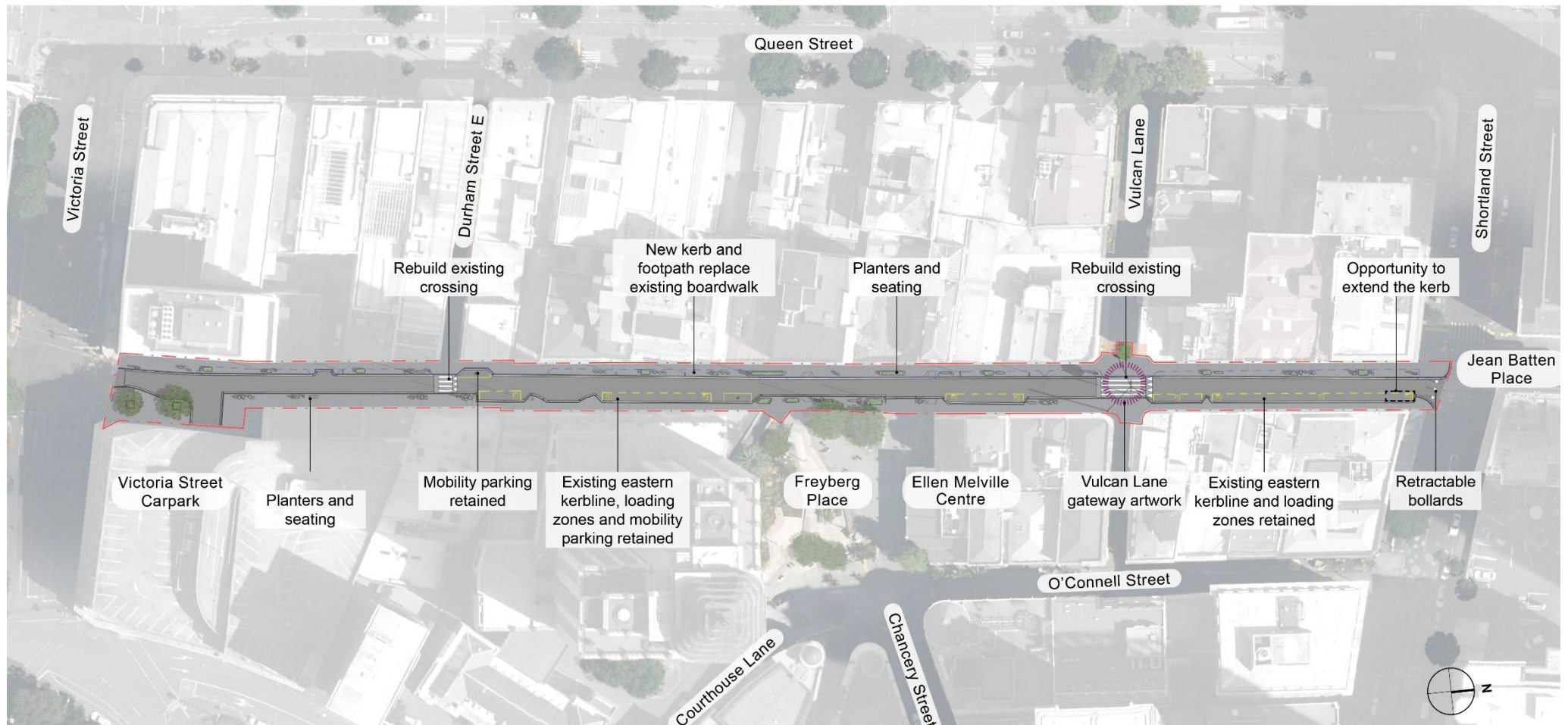
**Idea A: a refreshed street,
keeping its current layout**



Idea A – a refreshed street, keeping its current layout

A lighter-touch idea that largely keeps the street's current layout and look, makes the existing footpath extensions more durable and includes targeted upgrades to help the street function better.

We estimate that this idea would cost between \$5-\$7 million to deliver, over approximately six months. Any budget not needed would go back into the city centre targeted rate fund – to be invested into other improvements across the city centre.



What you'd experience

Retains current feel

- High Street would largely keep its current layout and feel.

Targeted upgrades to refresh the street

- Existing footpath would largely remain in place, with repairs made to areas that need it.
- Targeted improvements would build on what's already there – including seating, planting or public art where space allows.
- Road would be resurfaced to repair wear and tear - helping extend its life.

Better walking experience

- Timber boardwalk would be replaced with a durable, paved footpath.
- Pedestrian crossings would be rebuilt.
- Planters would be repositioned to create more space for people.

More space when people need it

- From 11am–2pm on weekdays, vehicles wouldn't be allowed on High Street, making more room for people and outdoor use, for things like pop-up dining or events.
- Emergency service vehicles and vehicles exiting the Victoria Street Carpark would still be able to access the street between 11am-2pm.
- Outside 11am-2pm on weekdays, deliveries and vehicle access would continue as normal.

Access, loading and servicing

- Loading zones would remain in their current locations, operating:
 - Between 6am-11am and 2pm-10pm on weekdays
 - Between 6am-10pm on weekends
- Loading and servicing would occur elsewhere between the pedestrian priority hours of 11am-2pm on weekdays.
- On-street paid parking would be retained overnight between 10pm-6am.
- The two existing mobility parking spaces would be retained.

Idea A - Shortland Street gateway

11am - 2pm weekdays - vehicle access unavailable on High Street

Key plan



Idea A - Vulcan Lane

11am - 2pm weekdays - vehicle access unavailable on High Street

Key plan



Idea A - Vulcan Lane

All other times



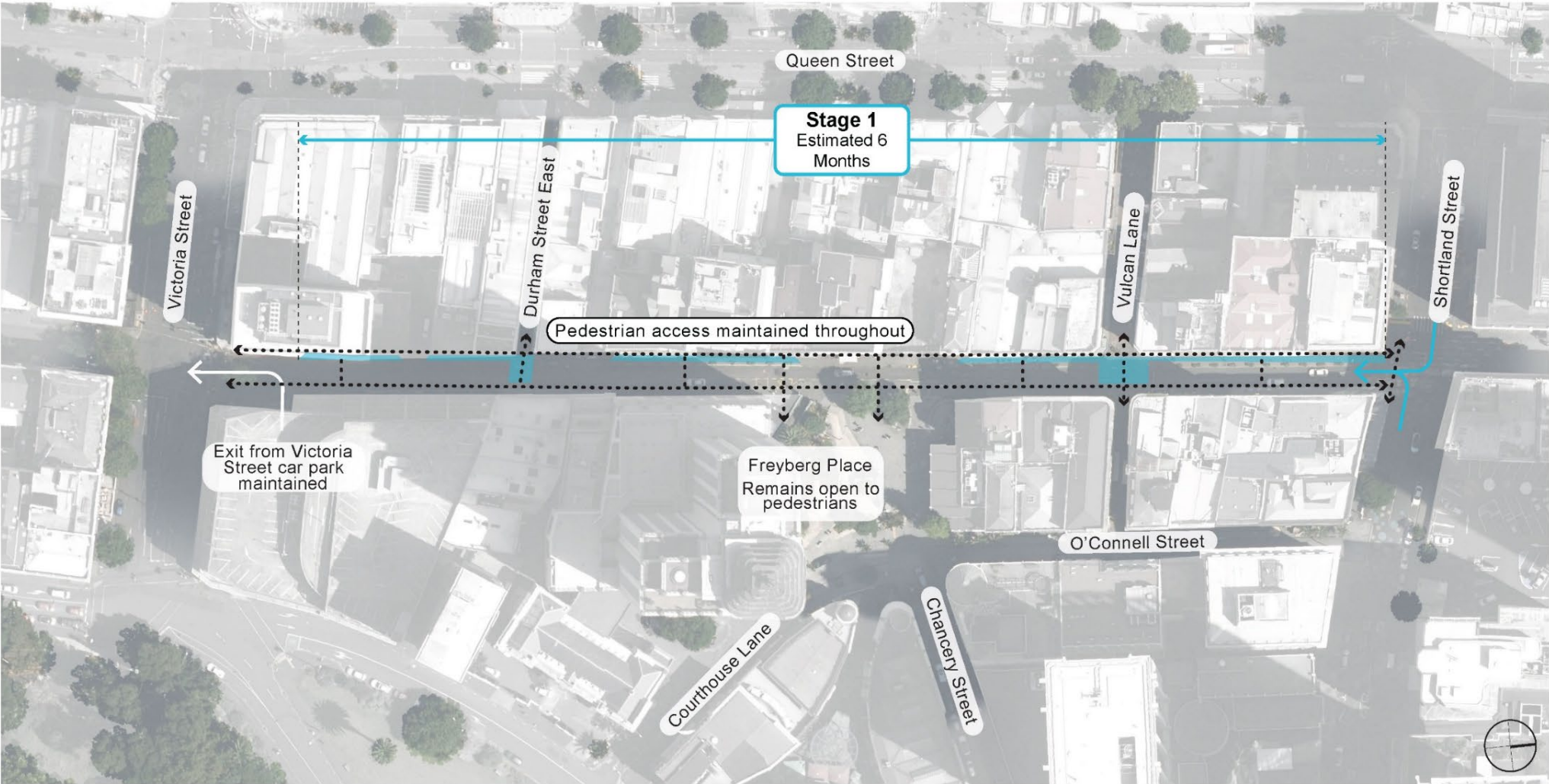
Idea A - Freyberg Place



Idea A - Durham Street East



Idea A - Indicative Construction Phasing



Notes

- ↔ Pedestrian access maintained throughout
- ← Vehicle access during Stage 1
- Works include re-surfacing of road and repair of existing footpath (as required)
- Loading & servicing available in local area

Construction Timeline - Indicative



Idea A: What construction could involve

We know that construction impacts the use of streets.

We want to make sure it's manageable and respectful to current users, including businesses and residents.

- Construction is estimated to take up **to 6 months**.
- Work would **be done in stages**, moving along the street section by section.
- We'd explore **low-impact methods** to manage disruption, building on top of what's already there.
- You would experience **some noise** and see temporary fencing around work areas that move along the street as work progresses.
- **Access** to businesses and for walking, deliveries and driving would **remain open**, though there may be temporary changes.
- We'd continue to coordinate with utility providers to reduce impacts.

This is indicative and aims to balance efficiency while minimising disruption as much as possible.

It will be refined as the project progresses, working closely with people who are impacted to understand their operations and needs.

Idea B: a people-friendly central block

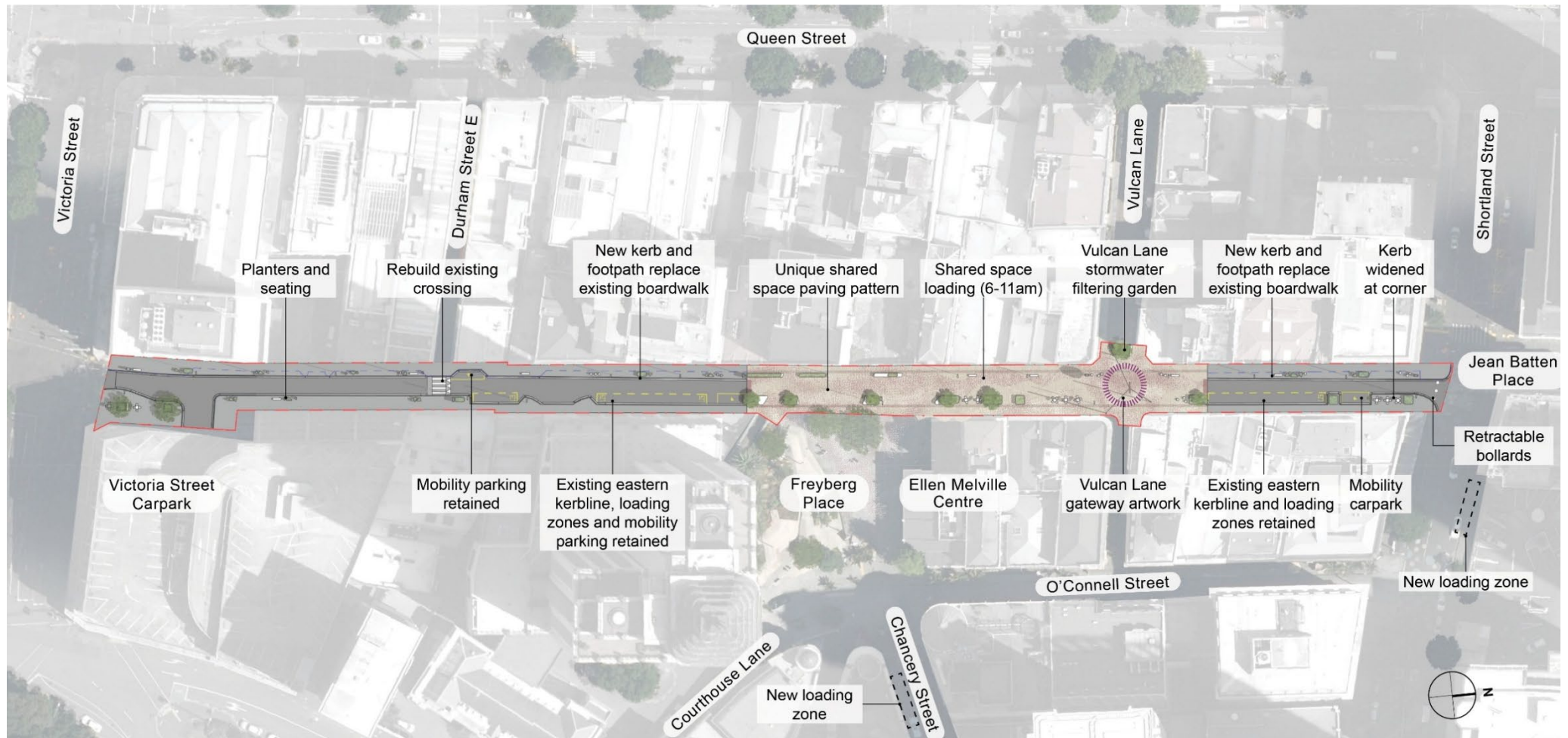


Idea B – a people-friendly central block

A balanced idea that upgrades the central block around Freyberg Place into a kerbless shared space that can be used flexibly.

The rest of the street largely keeps its current layout and look, makes the existing footpath extensions more durable and includes targeted upgrades to help the street function better.

We estimate that this idea would cost between \$11-\$13 million to deliver, over approximately 12 months.



What you'd experience

Retains current feel, providing more space for people

- Northern and southern ends would keep their current layout and feel.
- Central block would be upgraded to a kerbless people-focused space, drawing people in and improving connections to the wider district.
- Road would be resurfaced to repair wear and tear and help extend its life.

Better walking experience

- Timber boardwalk would be replaced with a durable, paved footpath outside of the central block.
- Existing footpaths would largely remain in place, with repairs made to areas that need it.
- Pedestrian crossings would be rebuilt.
- Planters would be repositioned to create more space for people.

More space when people need it

- From 11am–2pm on weekdays, vehicles wouldn't be allowed on High Street, making more space for people and outdoor use - for things like pop-up dining or events – especially in the central block.
- Emergency service vehicles and vehicles exiting the Victoria Street Carpark would still be able to access the street between 11am–2pm.
- Outside 11am–2pm on weekdays, deliveries and vehicle access would continue as normal.

Reflects unique identity

- In the central block, we'd explore additional opportunities for design, planting and storytelling elements to reflect High Street's identity and celebrate its uniqueness.

More welcoming

- Improved lighting and larger improvements in the central block would help make the area feel more welcoming and safer, especially at night.
- Outside of the central block, targeted improvements would build on what's already there – including seating, planting or public art where space allows.

Access, loading and servicing

- Loading zones would remain in their current locations (south of Freyberg Place, north of Vulcan Lane), operating:
 - Between 6am–11am and 2pm–10pm on weekdays
 - Between 6am–10pm on weekends
- Loading and servicing would be available in the central shared space area between 6am–11am.
- Loading and servicing would occur elsewhere between the pedestrian priority hours of 11am–2pm on weekdays.
- New loading zones would be introduced on Chancery Street and Shortland Street.
- On-street paid parking would be retained overnight, south of Freyberg Place and north of Vulcan Lane, between 10pm–6am.
- Three mobility parking spaces would be provided, including:
 - The two existing spaces
 - One new space, north of Vulcan Lane

Idea B - Shortland Street gateway

11am - 2pm weekdays - vehicle access unavailable on High Street

Key plan



Idea B - Vulcan Lane

11am - 2pm weekdays - vehicle access unavailable on High Street



Idea B - Vulcan Lane

All other times



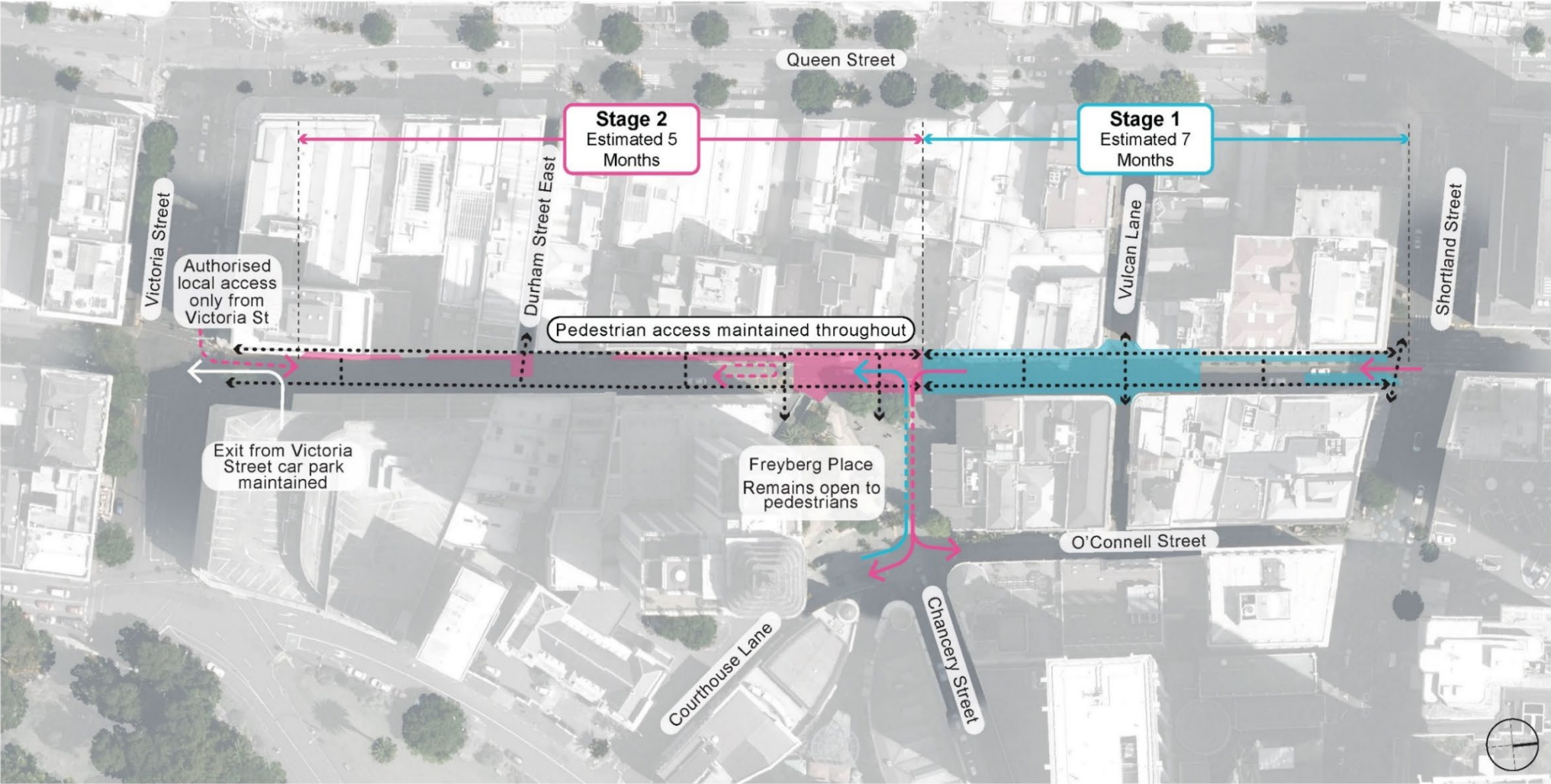
Idea B - Freyberg Place



Idea B - Durham Street East



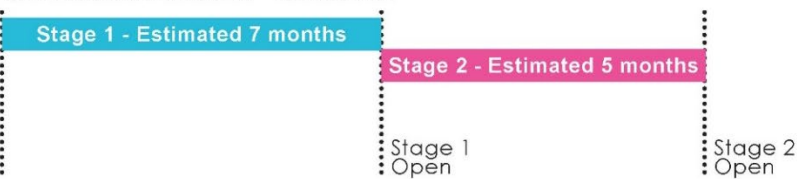
Idea B - Indicative Construction Phasing



Notes

- ↔ Pedestrian access maintained throughout
- ← Vehicle access during Stage 1
- ← Vehicle access during Stage 2
- Works include re-surfacing of road and repair of existing footpath (as required)
- Loading & servicing available in local area

Construction Timeline - Indicative



Idea B: What construction could involve

- Construction is estimated to take **around 12 months**.
- Work **would be done in stages**, moving along the street section by section.
- Most of the work would happen in **the central block** and involve **excavation** to upgrade utilities, improve drainage, and install new paving, lighting and planting.
- **Noise, dust and activity** would be present - especially during excavation and pavement works.
- We'd explore **low-impact methods** to manage disruption in the northern and southern ends, building on top of what's already there.
- A **temporary vehicle route through Freyberg Place** would help maintain vehicle access.
- **Access** to businesses and for walking, deliveries and driving **would remain open**, though there would be temporary changes.
- We'd continue to coordinate with utility providers to reduce impacts.

This is indicative and aims to balance efficiency while minimising disruption as much as possible.

It will be refined as the project progresses, working closely with people who are impacted to understand their operations and needs.



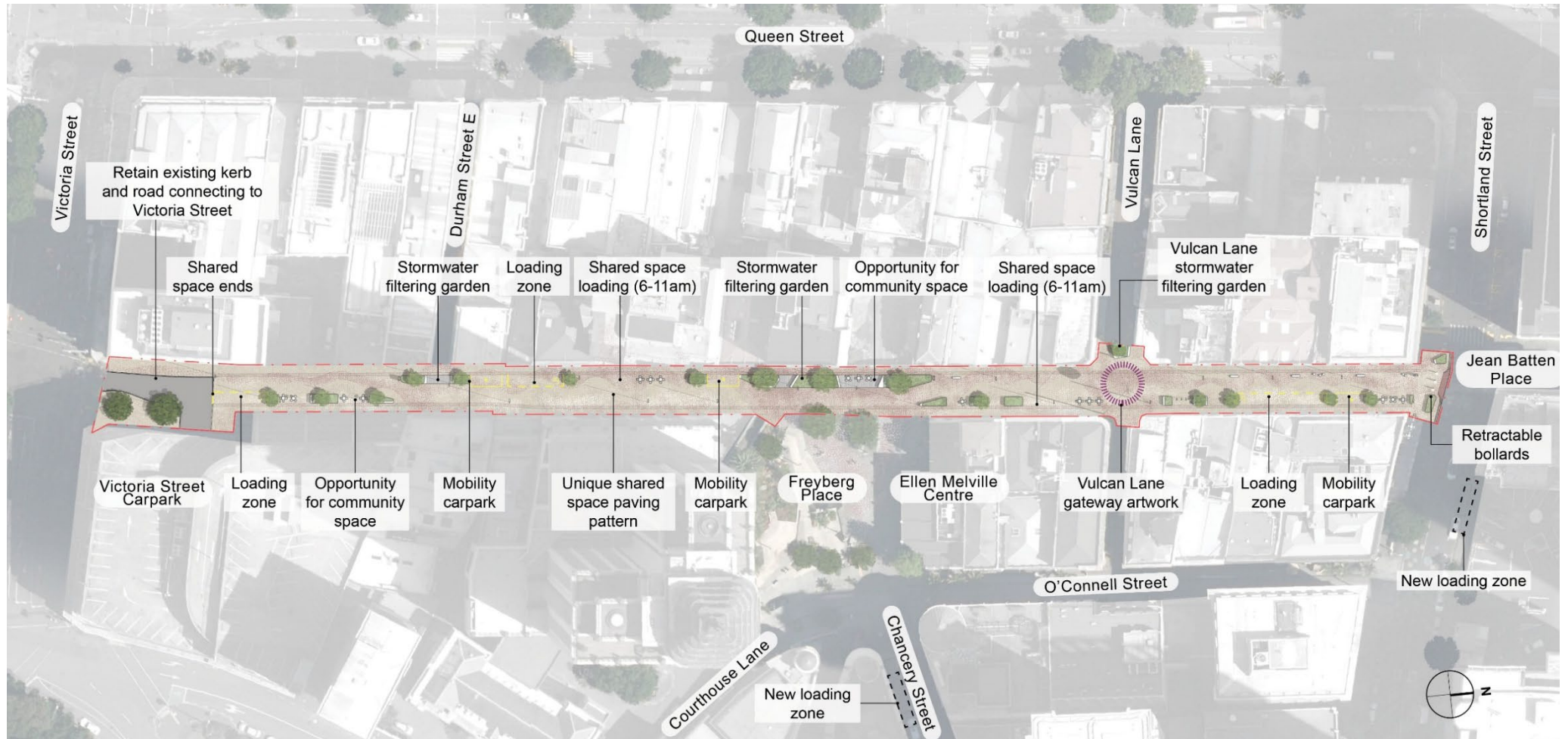
**Idea C: a people-first street,
from end to end**



Idea C – a people-first street, from end to end

A transformational idea that upgrades the full length of High Street, from Shortland Street to the Victoria Street carpark, into a pedestrian priority shared space, with new pavements, greenery and street furniture.

We estimate that this idea would cost between \$22-\$24 million to deliver, over approximately 18-24 months.



What you'd experience

A street that's made for people

- With more space to walk, sit and spend time, the street would feel more inviting, reinforce High Street as a destination, increase vibrancy and encourage people to stay longer.

Better walking experience

- The entire street would be a continuous, level surface that reduces trip hazards and supports universal access - making it easier for people walking and using wheelchairs, prams, walkers or mobility aids.

Safer and more welcoming

- Improved lighting across the whole street would help make it feel more welcoming and safer, especially at night.

More space when people need it

- From 11am–2pm on weekdays, vehicles wouldn't be allowed on High Street, making more room for people and outdoor use, for things like pop-up dining or events.
- Emergency service vehicles and vehicles exiting the Victoria Street Carpark would still be able to access the street between 11am-2pm.

Green and cared for

- Additional planting and garden areas would provide a greener High Street and help treat stormwater.

Reflects unique identity

- Throughout the whole street, we'd explore additional opportunities for design, planting and storytelling elements to reflect High Street's identity and celebrate its uniqueness.

Stronger connections

- Improved paving, signage and a design that responds to visual cues from Freyberg Place and nearby laneways – would help people find their way, discover what's nearby and want to return.

Access, loading and servicing

- On-street paid parking would not be available.
- Three mobility parking spaces would be provided:
 - One space north of Durham Street East
 - One space south of Freyberg Place
 - One space north of Vulcan Lane
- New loading zones would be introduced on Chancery Street and Shortland Street.
- Loading and servicing would occur elsewhere between the pedestrian priority hours of 11am-2pm on weekdays.

Idea C - Shortland Street gateway

11am - 2pm weekdays - vehicle access unavailable on High Street



Idea C - Vulcan Lane

11am - 2pm weekdays - vehicle access unavailable on High Street



Idea C - Vulcan Lane

All other times



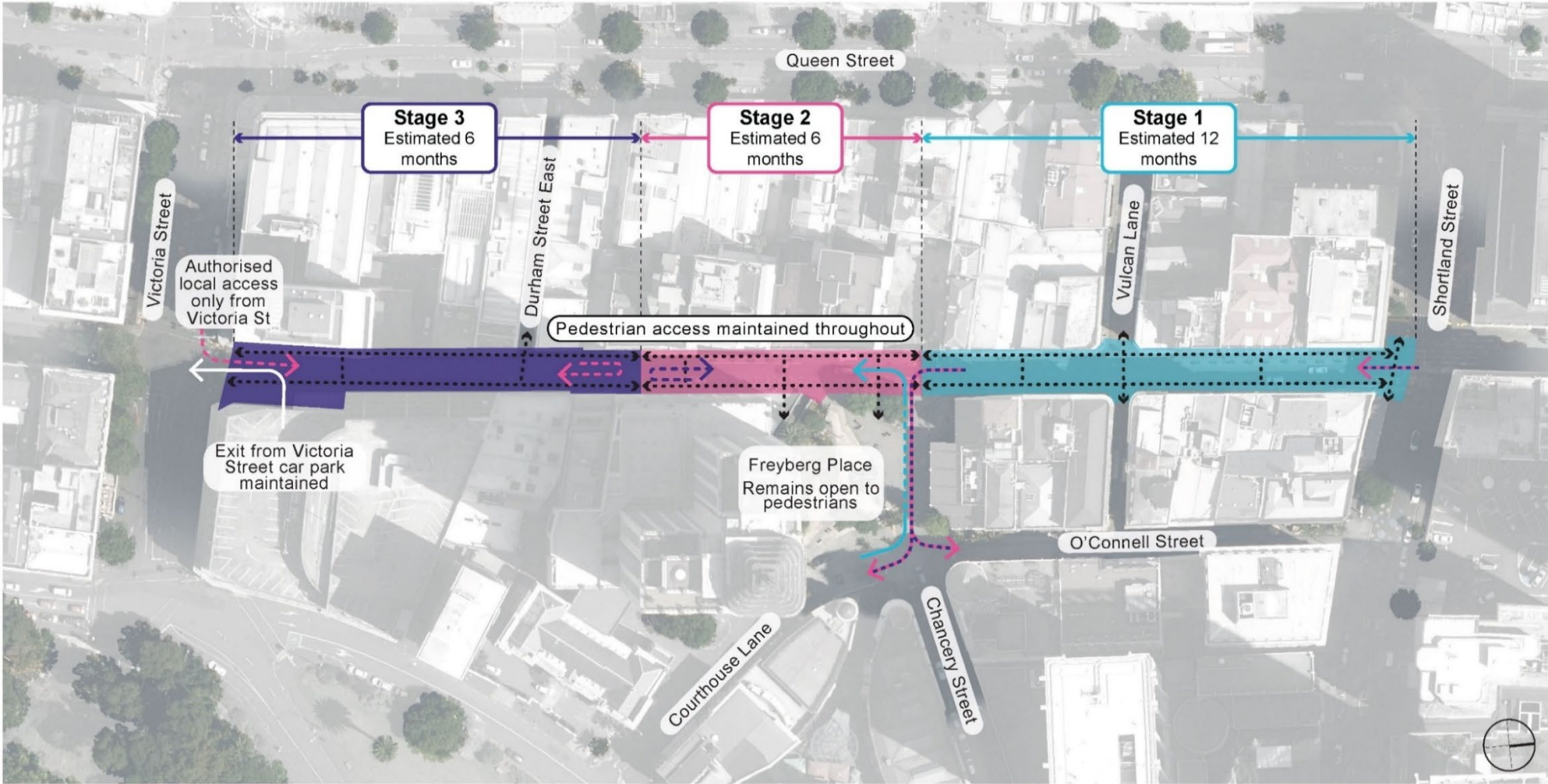
Idea C - Freyberg Place



Idea C - Durham Street East



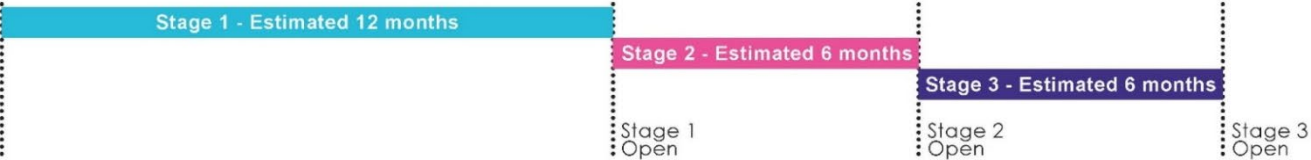
Idea C - Indicative Construction Phasing



Notes

- ↔ Pedestrian access maintained throughout
- Vehicle access during Stage 1
- Vehicle access during Stage 2
- Vehicle access during Stage 3
- Vehicle access during Stages 2 and 3
- Loading & servicing available in local area

Construction Timeline - Indicative



Idea C: What construction could involve

- Construction is estimated to take between **18-24 months**.
- Work would be **done in stages**, with the first parts of High Street reopening after 12 months.
- Work would **involve excavation** to upgrade utilities, improve drainage and install new paving, lighting and planting.
- **Intensive periods** of construction would take place, including noise, dust and activity throughout different parts of the street over time.
- A **temporary vehicle route through Freyberg Place** would help maintain vehicle access.
- **Access** to businesses and for walking, deliveries and driving would **remain open**, though there may be temporary changes.
- We'd continue to coordinate with utility providers to reduce impacts.

This is indicative and aims to balance efficiency while minimising disruption as much as possible.

It will be refined as the project progresses, working closely with people who are impacted to understand their operations and needs.

Exploring timed vehicle access



Exploring timed vehicle access

Between April and June 2024, transport monitoring showed that over 90% of movement on High Street was by people walking.

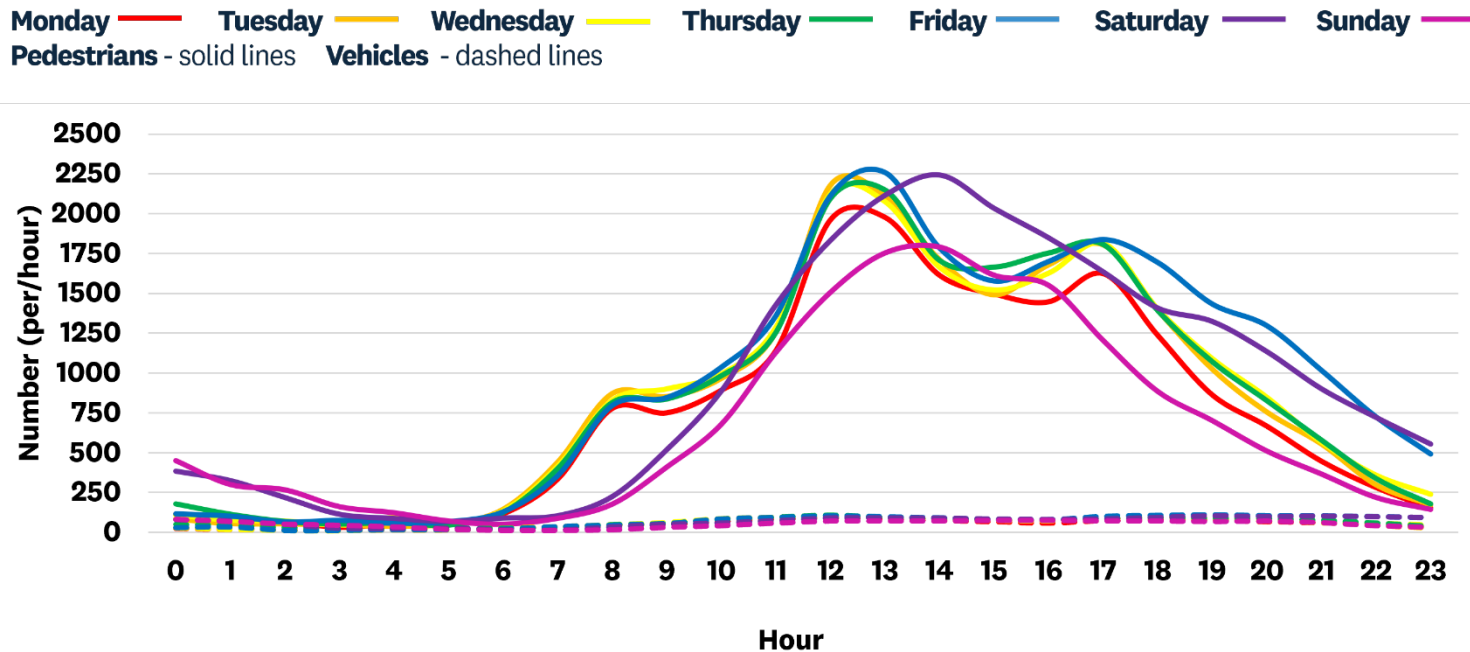
At its busiest - in the middle of the day - around 2,000 people movements were recorded on High Street each hour.

To make the most of this time, we're proposing to close High Street to vehicles from **11am to 2pm on weekdays** using retractable bollards at the Shortland Street entrance.

This would give people more space when High Street is busiest and help create a more vibrant, welcoming street - while still allowing vehicle access during the rest of the day and night.

Emergency service vehicles and vehicles exiting the Victoria Street Carpark would still be able to access the street from 11am-2pm.

We know this would mean a change for nearby businesses and properties and is something we'd aim to introduce with careful planning and collaboration.



High Street and Vulcan Lane Intersection

Hourly pedestrian and vehicle volumes

Have your say

Engagement is open from
Monday 21 July to Monday 18 August 2025

- Complete an online or paper feedback form at akhaveyoursay.nz/HighStreet
- Participate in a 45-minute conversation or interview email us at highst@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz to book.
- Come talk to us in person at one of our local drop-in sessions
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