

Ōtepoti Dunedin Central City Plan – draft Retail Quarter Revitalisation Plan

Introduction

In 2013 Dunedin City Council (DCC) Developed the Dunedin Central City Plan to guide development of the central city area for the next 10-15 years.

The Central City Plan established a vision. The vision is aspirational and aims to support the city's goal of becoming "one of the world's great small cities". It seeks to create a central city space that is vibrant and compelling, safe and accessible, environmentally sustainable, culturally inclusive and a hub for the community and economic activity. The plan aims to help create a city centre Dunedin can be proud of.

The plan includes a series of physical works aimed at improving the way the central city functions. It also comprises operational changes to the way the spaces in the city are managed, maintained, and marketed. These interventions and changes are staged over a number of years and range in scale. To be successful, the recommended investments aim to be visionary and inspirational, yet practical and realistic in terms of their feasibility.

The Plan is not only about changes to public spaces, but also about coordination of other projects, such as essential underground infrastructure renewals. It also includes a range of low-cost trials and initiatives, aimed at experimenting with new ideas and giving the wider community the opportunity to contribute to their central city.

The Plan divides the central city into 'quarters', intended to reflect the different types of activities that occur in these parts of the city, to encourage certain types of development in certain areas, and help to foster a distinctive character in each.

The Retail Quarter is the area of the central city around George Street, Dunedin's key shopping street. The different retail styles on George Street and adjoining side streets, lanes and alleys include 'strip retail', malls, boutiques and department stores. These have been joined by a growing number of cafés and restaurants. Over time, changes have been made to the urban amenity, road layouts, public transport and parking to improve the look and use of George Street.

Different sections of George Street have gradually developed their own character and activity clusters. The northern end, closest to the tertiary-medical quarter, has become heavily populated by cafés, bars, restaurants and boutique retail. The block between Hanover Street and St Andrew Street has consolidated as the heart of clothing retailing, anchored by the three interconnected 'malls' – The Meridian, Golden Centre, and Wall Street. The southernmost section has a more mixed feel, but is most strongly influenced by the banking sector and the DCC Civic Centre. Similarly, Filleul Street and Great King Street have both taken on different functions to George Street, with some more vehicle-based businesses such as supermarkets and bulkier goods retailers choosing to locate in these areas, attracted by the higher numbers of on-street and off-street car parks, lower rents and larger sites.

Within each of these sections of the quarter, there are slightly different needs and challenges. Vitality also varies, with some subsections currently displaying lower occupancy rates and attracting less foot traffic than others. Ownership patterns, levels of investment, and macroeconomic conditions have influenced this equation, impacting the commercial viability of buildings and the types of businesses attracted to them.

Strengths and weaknesses

The Central City Plan identified a number of strengths and weaknesses within the Retail Quarter.

The Retail Quarter remains the busy heart of Dunedin's retail sector, with the city's highest pedestrian counts. Strengths contributing to this continued success include:

- an attractive and welcoming environment
- visual interest of the heritage buildings lining the street
- a sunnier and more sheltered microclimate than other parts of the central city
- proximity of the University and Hospital
- proximity to large amounts of off-street public parking
- the continued cluster of retail activity
- a topography that encourages ease of accessibility for a range of users.

However, over the last decade there have been more vacant shops than in the past and the public area looks increasingly tired and dated. The George Street commercial quarter faces a number of challenges and issues, including:

- the need to complete 'three waters' infrastructure renewals and paving upgrades
- changing retail patterns and the growth of online shopping
- lease costs of locating businesses on George Street
- cost of building upgrades
- further relocation of retail and services away from the CBD
- conflicting ideas related to the amount of space and priority allocated to different road users (e.g., cars, cyclists, public transport, pedestrians)
- high numbers of accidents involving vulnerable road users
- conflicting views over the amount, location and types of car parking
- the effects of large numbers of buses using George Street (noise pollution, fumes, amount of space used for bus stops)
- confusion between roads acting as a destination or a through route
- low levels of building maintenance and upgrade
- a limited range of shop sizes
- limited amounts of public space and areas to rest, along with the uninspiring nature of existing public areas, with limited public art and a lack of innovative design
- the age and style of amenity improvements and street furniture make the area appear dated
- too few public toilets
- the difficulty of negotiating the area for those with disabilities

How we got here /development of the plan

The draft Retail Quarter Revitalisation Plan contains input from a wide range of stakeholders.

It draws on information from multiple rounds of consultation on the Central City Plan and George Street works since 2011 as well as feedback received through other Council processes, such as the Spatial Plan, 2nd Generation District Plan (2GP), Annual Plan, Long Term Plan and, more recently, the Central City Advisory Group.

The plan also draws on numerous one-to-one conversations with key stakeholders in the Quarter, including businesses, visitors, building owners, lobby and interest groups, various DCC departments and other governmental agencies such as the Otago Regional Council and Waka Kotahi. It also integrates thinking from work undertaken by the Ō3 Collective (the consortium selected by the DCC to undertake the physical upgrade of the Retail Quarter, i.e., Isaac (construction), AECOM and Jasmax) and from hui with Aukaha.

This draft plan now seeks feedback from the public.

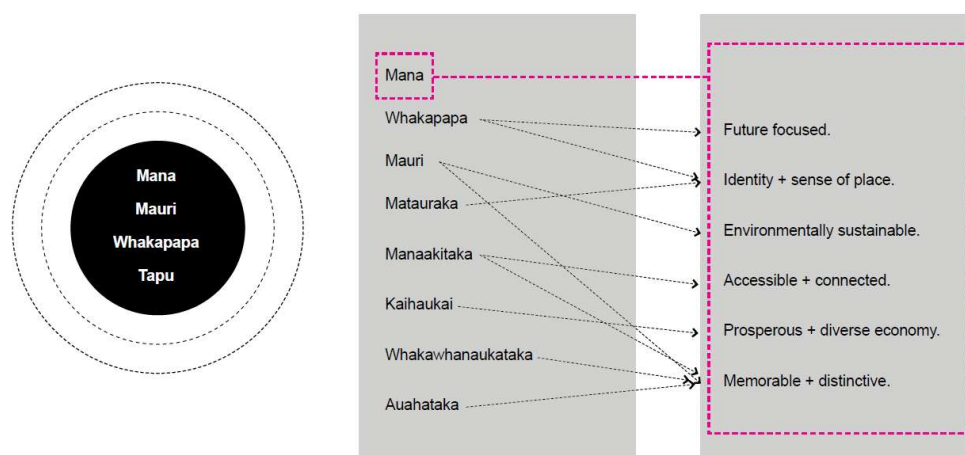
Vision and directions

The overall vision of the Retail Quarter Revitalisation Plan is to maintain and enhance the Retail Quarter as Dunedin's premiere retail destination.

The original strategic directions of the Central City Plan were based on those in the Spatial Plan. They are presented below.



Through further specific consultation on the Retail Quarter with Aukaha and other stakeholders, a more refined set of directions have been developed. These are defined below.



The following sections discuss each of the directions in further depth and list a set of proposed actions to meet each.

The success of the Retail Quarter will be strongly influenced by making the area as accessible as possible to a wide range of Dunedin residents and visitors.

Access should be thought of in a comprehensive way, both in terms of ensuring that getting into the Retail Quarter is as convenient as possible by a range of transport modes, and reducing barriers to people accessing the area due to disability or mobility issues, income, age, gender, culture or similar factors.

Once people have made their way to the Retail Quarter, making the environment they are in a safe, welcoming, attractive and enjoyable place to be in and move around is important.

The broader the range of people that want to visit and spend time in the area, the greater the vibrancy and opportunities for commerce. These conditions should extend beyond the normal trading hours, so that the space is one that is occupied for longer periods and where a broader range of activities can take place. The Retail Quarter should feel safe 24 hours a day for all visitors, as well as for residents and those working in the area.

Challenges

- People are increasingly time-poor. Many prioritise transport options that optimise their use of time and ability to achieve multiple activities on single journeys.
- Alternative transport options in Dunedin remain limited and less convenient for many residents, resulting in a continued reliance on private motor vehicles.
- Transporting retail purchases on transport modes other than private vehicles or taxis can be difficult, even where people wish to reduce their use of cars.
- There are competing needs for parking resources between shorter-term users such as shoppers and longer-term users such as commuters.
- Leased parking can 'lock up' significant numbers of parking spaces which could be used more flexibly by a greater number of visitors to the quarter.
- There is a finite amount of road space and growing competition for its use from increasing numbers and types of road users.
- Some Dunedin residents became accustomed to short commuting times in our "10 minute city", but with a growing population, dispersed city layout and reliance on private vehicles, congestion and travel times are growing.
- The area's night-time economy lacks diversity.
- There are issues with alcohol-related harm late at night, particularly in weekends.
- The lack of people in the area at night reduces passive surveillance and can make the area feel unsafe, particularly to more vulnerable users.
- Limited footpath widths, clutter on pavements, pavement condition, pedestrian numbers, and the use of scooters on the pavement make the area difficult to negotiate for those with mobility issues and impaired vision and discourages them from visiting.
- There are limited non-retail attractions in the Retail Quarter to make longer visits more possible, particularly for groups like families.

Opportunities

- Change and new technologies are increasing the transport choices available to people.
- The multiple parking buildings in close proximity to the Retail Quarter could be managed differently to maximise their availability for shoppers.
- Recent infrastructure investments in cycle and bus facilities near the Retail Quarter could provide more convenient journeys for these users, particularly if they are more connected.
- Increasing numbers of apartments in the central city and density in the inner-city suburbs will provide a growing resident population for Retail Quarter businesses, enhancing the night-time economy and passive surveillance of the area.
- Large organisations with high staff numbers based close to the Retail Quarter e.g. DCC, DHB, University, consistently contribute to the day time population of the area.
- Addressing accessibility issues to attract groups who are currently marginalised from the Retail Quarter will increase its foot traffic and potential customers.
- The site of the existing hospital will be redeveloped in future, offering opportunities for expanded public open space in addition to other activities.

Potential actions

- Prioritise comprehensive universal access principles as a key design priority for the Retail Quarter public realm improvements.
- Work with disability groups to identify the barriers to accessing the Retail Quarter from other parts of Dunedin and advocate for improvements in this space.
- Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into the area's future development.
- Work with the ORC to continue bus system improvements to maximise public transport use among visitors to the Retail Quarter, including better connectivity within the central city.
- Investigate opportunities to improve links between the bus hub and George Street.
- Improve information about off-street parking availability by introducing real-time information on parking, promotion campaigns and similar measures to improve Retail Quarter access.
- Improve vehicle and pedestrian access to off-street car parks.
- Work with car parking building owners to improve the buildings' attractiveness to the general public.
- Work with the malls' owners to maximise the use of their car parking resources.
- Support DCC Parking Plan development to maximise use for priority groups in the Retail Quarter.
- Support attracting a car share system to the city.
- Support opportunities for micro-mobility in the area.
- Investigate barriers to accessibility within the Retail Quarter to lower and fixed income residents, and options to address these issues.

Indicators

Increases in:

- pedestrian counts in the Retail Quarter
- utilisation of parking buildings in the CBD
- cycle counts into the CBD

- numbers of bus patrons into CBD
- micro-mobility counts in the Retail Quarter
- use of the Retail Quarter by currently marginalised groups such as the elderly, disabled groups (to confirm who is identified).

Environmentally sustainable

MAURI

Like the rest of Ōtepoti, the Retail Quarter will be increasingly impacted by the impacts of climate change in the coming years. Already, parts of the quarter have flooded during extreme weather events. These incidents are only likely to intensify if changes are not made.

The community has demonstrated its interest in reducing impacts on the environment and improving the city's sustainability. As a Quarter focused on consumption and reliant on attracting visitors from afar, often by vehicle, this presents challenges that will only increase as the city grows and more people visit.

However, a focus on sustainability also offers opportunities to change the way people engage with the area, providing a healthier and more enjoyable places to spend time, providing economic benefits for businesses, and personal and social benefits for residents and visitors.

Greening of the central city can also contribute to expanding networks and corridors for native species and increase Dunedin residents' daily interaction with native flora and fauna.

Challenges

- Climate change will result in greater variability of conditions in the Retail Quarter.
- There is a great deal of hard-surfacing in the area, which contributes to issues with flooding and the quality of run-off.
- Recycling options for residents and businesses are more limited in the Quarter, negatively impacting overall efforts to divert more material from landfill.
- There are space constraints with existing buildings that limit options for managing waste and recycling better, for both commercial and residential tenants.
- Reducing the environmental impact of travel into the Retail Quarter is hampered by the slow uptake of transport options other than private vehicles, e.g., bicycles, buses and walking.
- The replacement of ageing infrastructure requires significant inputs of new materials and machinery, which will result in substantial carbon and waste outputs.
- Amenity plantings are limited and focus on exotic species, which may not maximise opportunities for supporting native species or local ecosystems.
- The existing large trees in George Street are not well-suited to the local environment and will need to be removed during the construction period, which will reduce the amount of canopy cover in the area.

Opportunities

- Dunedin City Council has committed to reducing Dunedin's net carbon emissions to net zero by 2030, increasing focus on this issue for all Dunedin residents.
- The replacement of infrastructure and transformation of the area offers opportunities to install new and more sustainable approaches to management of the Quarter.
- The DCC is already proposing and trialling a number of initiatives that may lead to more sustainable approaches in the Quarter.

- Research into sustainability initiatives and new solutions coming to market, increase the range and affordability of methods to address the issues faced.
- The construction and design partners for the infrastructure and amenity upgrades (The Ō3 Collective) have demonstrated a proactive approach to sustainability.

Potential actions

- Work with the Ō3 Collective on a project to sequester as much carbon and divert as much waste from landfill as possible from the construction works.
- Where practicable, consider using upgrade materials that can be fully recycled at end of life.
- Investigate carbon/green certification for the construction and amenity improvement projects.
- Work proactively with businesses in the area to reduce waste and energy use, both during building upgrades and in day-to-day operations.
- Install infrastructure to enable participation by businesses and residents in the proposed District Energy Scheme.
- Maximise the planting of native species in the Retail Quarter and the potential for plantings to reduce the risk of flooding and improve water quality.
- Encourage the use of active, low-carbon modes of transport via attractive and safe design in the amenity and transport upgrades.
- Install monitoring equipment to measure ongoing carbon outputs in the area to track progress towards net zero carbon goals.
- Review the approach to waste and recycling collection in the central city.
- Install additional recycling stations in the Retail Quarter, targeted to residential tenants.
- Install an expanded network of public recycling bins throughout the Retail Quarter.
- Encourage commercial or social enterprise initiatives to manage food waste in the central city.
- Encourage the development of a “repair space” in the central city, aimed at encouraging people to repair and reuse or repurpose goods, rather than sending them to landfill.

Indicators

- Increased recycling stats.
- Reduced waste to landfill from the Quarter.
- Reduced CO₂ measurements on George Street.
- Reduced occurrence of flooding into private properties.
- Zero carbon status for project.
- Increased m² of native plants.

The scale of investment and disruption required to upgrade infrastructure and the public realm in the Retail Quarter means that it happens infrequently. This means that any changes made to the public realm are likely to remain in place well into the future. For reference, the existing amenity improvements were made around thirty years ago.

At the same time, Dunedin is changing more quickly than in the recent past. A growing and increasingly diverse population, major new infrastructure projects, and the impacts of climate change, policy adaptation and technology advances mean this change is likely to evolve and even accelerate further over the coming decade. Knowing how George Street will have to adapt in five years, let alone thirty years, is increasingly challenging. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has only demonstrated just how quickly life and the way we use our central city can change. Technology disruptors in the spaces of transport and retail also continue to transform the way we live and move around. These changes should be seen as opportunities, providing new solutions to the challenges we face and offering new ways to interact, spend our time and do business in the central city.

Dunedin will continue to evolve in the coming years and so will the ways we use our Retail Quarter. This means that, more than ever, it is important to consider flexibility and adaptability in the design of the Retail Quarter. A space that can evolve and respond to changing demands is not only likely to be more successful in the long-term, but will also be one that is more cost-effective, as the need to make changes is reduced.

Challenges

- It is generally difficult to predict change.
- There has been traditionally significant resistance to change in Dunedin from a vocal group of ratepayers, who often find support in the local media, making decision-makers more conservative about experimentation or radical change.
- Dunedin residents have been traditionally sceptical about the applicability of case studies from elsewhere to the Dunedin context.
- In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, some Retail Quarter businesses are continuing to struggle, making them more nervous about experimentation and change.
- The up-front and on-going operational costs of technological solutions.
- Designing for flexibility can be difficult and present additional costs in the short-term, but can offer longer-term benefits.
- Some people may not be familiar or comfortable with Smart technologies.

Opportunities

- Technology will offer new ways to manage existing challenges like maximising parking availability and making public transport more convenient.
- The presence of the University and Polytech means Dunedin has a strong basis for innovation and technology in addition to a well-developed start-up culture/entrepreneurship.

- Local authorities already use technology that could assist retailers and other businesses in the city, e.g. pedestrian and vehicle counts which could help assess and predict customer demand peaks.
- There is a strong start-up culture and interest in innovation in the city that could be applied to the Retail Quarter.

Potential actions

- Investigate opportunities for smart technologies to manage/enhance activity in the Retail Quarter.
- Where possible, install infrastructure that allows for the addition of future technologies.
- Prioritise technology solutions with high levels of interoperability to enable comprehensive and integrated approaches to the area's upgrade.
- Work with the University of Otago, Otago Polytechnic and local technology providers to create opportunities for Dunedin-based technology solutions to challenges in the Retail Quarter. Perhaps via a 'technology challenge' event to jumpstart innovation on specific issues.
- Work to become part of the Smart Cities network and embed this approach within the DCC.
- Work to incorporate data gathered from technology solutions implemented by the DCC and other partners into the proposed online dashboard.

Indicators

- Increased % of Dunedin-based retailers also having an online presence.
- Dunedin's position in Smart Cities ranking.
- Increase % of local providers for technology solutions used by the DCC.

Prosperous + diverse economy

KAIHAUKAI

To create a place that can better compete with other centres and online retail, the Retail Quarter needs a good mix of retail offerings and other businesses, of local, national and international brands, of chain stores and specialty retailers, of food and beverage offerings, and of other events and attractions. Variety is important. An area that attracts a diverse range of people will include a mix of established businesses and newer start-ups and temporary pop-up offers.

There need to be opportunities for people to enjoy the space and social interaction, even if they do not have large amounts of money to spend. While retail should be the predominant activity in the area, other activities and attractions can bring people into the area and make it easier or more attractive to spend time there.

Future success in the Retail Quarter will rely on more than just the DCC's investment in the public realm. A constructive, collaborative approach between the DCC, businesses, property owners, user groups and other stakeholders will be far more likely to lay the foundations for a vibrant and attractive area for people to visit and invest in.

Challenges

- There is growing competition for a retail spend from national and international online retailers and from traditional retailers in other parts of the city, region and country.
- As people increasingly work from home, more needs to be done to attract them into the Retail Quarter and to maximise their spend when they are in the area.
- Lease costs are becoming more prohibitive for local and more specialty retailers, reducing diversity and choice for shoppers.
- There has been a loss of large anchor retailers from the Retail Quarter.
- Dunedin lacks some of the more innovative and international retail brands, so it is not seen as a retail destination for those outside Dunedin.
- Many Dunedin residents perceive a lack choice in the current retail offerings and choose to shop elsewhere (online or outside Dunedin).
- Some Dunedin retailers have not adapted to the changing retail environment or understand how they can better appeal to different consumer groups.
- There is limited coordination between retailers and other businesses in the Retail Quarter for marketing, campaigns, and business attraction.
- The upheaval created by this and other construction projects in the central city may discourage people from visiting the Retail Quarter and have a negative effect on retailers already impacted by Covid-19 and reduced retail spend.
- Attracting people back to shop in the area once they have established new behaviours can be difficult.
- Increased retail vibrancy could reduce the space available for creatives and start-ups.

Opportunities

- There remains a strong community desire to protect and enhance the Retail Quarter as Dunedin's preeminent retail area.
- Retail drift is still more limited than in many other towns and cities.
- A number of unique Dunedin brands and businesses remain in the area.
- Dunedin has a strong start-up culture and multiple hubs of innovation that could contribute more to the Retail Quarter than they currently do.
- There is a large amount of vacant and underutilised spaces (e.g. upper floors, basements, rear parts of buildings) that could be activated to expand the amount and types of spaces available for business and other uses in the area.
- Mixed use in the area can provide a larger resident community to support retail and other commercial activities.
- Hospital construction workers and other associated construction work will provide a short-to medium-term boost to foot traffic.

Potential actions

- Establish a jointly funded Retail Quarter business association and paid coordinator, tasked with marketing, management, events, business attraction and day to day coordination of the Quarter.
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce/Business South and other partners to develop a programme of business assistance and training to assist retailers adapt to the challenges of online retail and other technology changes.
- Develop a Central City dashboard/web portal consolidating data gathered by the DCC and others to assist businesses in better developing their products and services and managing their businesses (e.g. pedestrian and other user counts, retail spending).
- Work closely with building owners to ensure rental affordability for local businesses.
- Work with building owners/developers to identify opportunities for smaller, more affordable spaces in close proximity to George Street (e.g. laneways) to ensure variety in the types of businesses that can operate in the area.
- Investigate development of a pop-up hub in the area to allow start-ups an opportunity to temporarily access George Street and add to the variety in the area.
- Continue to work with Urban Brokerage Hoe Ākau to activate vacant spaces and showcase opportunities in the area.
- Encourage increased marketing to the large employers are in close proximity to the Retail Quarter e.g. DCC, DHB, University to encourage staff to shop more regularly in the area.
- Work closely with the Council's Community Development and Events team, to support engagement with migrants, older people, youth and people with disabilities to better understand the sense of place for these groups and how this can be developed.

Indicators

- Increased growth in retail spend figures.
- Stabilised/recaptured retail spend for central city.
- Reduction in the number of vacant shops at ground floor level.
- Reduction in the overall m² of vacant space.
- Increased number of businesses active in the area.

Identity + sense of place

Whakapapa

Matauraka

The Retail Quarter already has a strong identity and sense of place, based predominantly on its Victorian and Edwardian architecture, building scale, vibrancy and backdrop. This could be strengthened further, particularly by expanding recognition of the area's history and culture beyond its relatively narrow focus to embrace a broader range of Dunedin's diverse communities and ensure they see their heritage reflected in the area.

The absence of any mana whenua representation is the most prominent cultural gap in the Retail Quarter.. There is no visibility of Māori culture or history in the area. There is no reference or embodiment of Kāi Tahu cultural values or status as Ōtepoti mana whenua.

Weaving these cultural values and narratives into the area is important, not only in terms of respecting the Treaty of Waitangi partnership, but also in terms of creating a more meaningful identity and richer sense of place for an area that could otherwise have little to differentiate it from other small cities and towns elsewhere. These efforts should extend beyond tokenistic artistic embellishments, to embrace a more comprehensive integration of mana whenua values throughout the design, function and management of the area.

Layered upon these references to mana whenua cultural values can be other expressions of Dunedin's diversity. Historically, Dunedin has had a wealth of different cultural influences (such as Chinese, Jewish and Lebanese communities) and this diversity continues to grow today. The city is renowned for its large student and youth population, though this is not currently reflected in the Retail Quarter's public realm. Other groups are also not well-represented.

To attract as wide a range of visitors as possible, it is important that the Retail Quarter's existing appeal is enhanced, mirroring and celebrating the city's diverse cultures, values and interests.

Challenges

- There has been a long-term focus on the Pākehā elements of Dunedin's history, particularly the Scottish and Victorian character, and some may find the representation of other cultural values in the area challenging.
- While the area's heritage buildings are a key element in giving the Retail Quarter a sense of place, many are in need of investment and restoration/repair.
- The protected status of the area's heritage buildings restricts the extent to which other cultural values can be represented and integrated (e.g., visually) with them.
- There are limited 'play/activities' that attract young people, and children and their families.

Opportunities

- There is a strong desire from mana whenua to work collaboratively in the redevelopment of the central city.
- Kāi Tahu values and design provide a strong basis from which to build a unique identity and better sense of place.
- Migrant groups are seeking ways and places to share their culture with other residents.

- Ngāi Tahu Properties are developing the new ACC building elsewhere in the central city, raising hopes for further investment and development elsewhere, including in or adjacent to the Retail Quarter.
- There is a rich cultural history to draw on in the quarter, that previously has not been interpreted or represented well.
- Increased investment in the many heritage buildings within the Retail Quarter will improve the streetscape amenity for users, provide additional inner city apartment and office space, and provide opportunities to integrate mana whenua values in creative ways.

Potential actions

- Work closely with mana whenua to ensure the redevelopment of the public realm better incorporates cultural values and identity.
- Reach out to a more diverse range of stakeholders to understand their needs and aspirations in the area, including young people and families, Pāsifika and other migrant communities through existing networks.
- Work with the Dunedin Heritage Fund and other potential funding partners to target heritage incentives to owners in the area in order to encourage restorative and adaptive reuse works alongside public investment in the streetscape.
- Create more regular pop-up events / activations to help enliven the area, and encourage people to visit.

Indicators

- Strengthened relationship with mana whenua.
- Number of heritage buildings upgraded.
- Number of historic interpretive elements installed.
- Number of cultural and other events in the area, with associated increased pedestrian counts.

Memorable + distinctive

Mauri

Manaakitaka

Whakawhanaukataka

Auahataka

To attract shoppers and other visitors, it is important that the Retail Quarter is not only functional from an access and movement perspective, but also a place that people feel compelled to visit. It needs to be attractive and engaging and appeal to a wide range of people. Given the convenience of online retail and challenge from retailers elsewhere, the Retail Quarter needs to offer a point of difference and additional experiences in order to bring people into the area, particularly in the wake of COVID-19.

A high-quality public realm is one ingredient in creating a compelling destination. Over the last decade, many towns and cities around the country have upgraded their public spaces in an effort to attract shoppers and retailers back to their main streets. While the Retail Quarter remains more robust than many similar areas around the country, the length of time since the last upgrades in the area mean the public realm is in need of significant upgrade to retain existing visitors and attract new ones. After visiting other public spaces around the country and overseas, local and other visitors have greater expectations of the experiences the Retail Quarter should provide.

The DCC does not have sole responsibility for creating a memorable and distinctive experience in the Quarter. Peoples' experiences are also strongly influenced by the private sector and other stakeholders in the area. While the quality of retail offerings and customer service are key factors (see Prosperous + Diverse Economy), much of the area's ambience is provided by its built elements and their presentation and design. This makes building owners, developers, businesses and other groups important partners in creating an engaging environment. It is essential that the DCC and private stakeholders work closely together to improve the appearance of existing buildings and spaces, and in maximising the opportunity for new developments to be interesting attractions and bring more people into the area.

The area's range of activities is also important. Increasingly, successful commercial areas have complimentary activities that support retail and attract visitors. These may include food and beverage, entertainment, public institutions like museums and galleries, performance venues, and residential activities. Arts and events can further augment these activities, providing an entirely different rationale for visiting, or one that enhances normal day-to-day interactions with the Quarter. Encouraging this variety of experiences to appeal to a range of visitors of different ages and backgrounds will contribute strongly to a more vibrant area.

Challenges

- Dunedin is competing with towns and cities around the country that are investing heavily their public realms to make them more attractive places to visit.
- The Retail Quarter is relatively large, there has been a lack of investment in the public realm for many years and budgets for DCC improvements are limited, meaning it is unlikely the same level of enhancements can be applied across the entire area.
- Apart from the road corridor, there is a lack of any meaningful/useable public space in Retail Quarter, increasing competition for this limited space.

- The transformative potential of the project will be reduced if private landlords adjacent to George Street and other parts of the Retail Quarter do not also invest in improving the appearance of their buildings.
- Empty shops have a negative effect on the main street and create a perception of the deterioration of an area, even when their numbers are limited.
- Encouraging transformative change can be difficult, particularly if it leads to uncertainty for existing stakeholders and users of the area.
- While increasing the variety of central city activities can lead to greater vibrancy, it can also create conflicts between uses, particularly between residential activities and late-night venues.

Opportunities

- This is a once in a generation opportunity to enhance the central city's distinctive appeal.
- The inclusion of Kāi Tahu values and design provides a strong basis upon which to transform the central city.
- Incentive schemes run elsewhere in Dunedin have demonstrated the potential to encourage private owners to undertake works on their buildings.
- There is a strong recognition that significant improvements are required in the central city to protect its position as the preeminent retail area in Dunedin.
- It is possible to see and measure the positive benefits delivered by large-scale amenity upgrades elsewhere around the country.
- Currently, activations and key events are focused on the Octagon, but an upgraded Retail Quarter would provide opportunities to extend them through the area.

Potential actions

- Develop a series of arts activation events during the planning and construction phase to continue to encourage visitors.
- Work with partners and the arts community to develop an on-going, dynamic arts presence in the Quarter.
- Develop a collaborative relationship with developers and building owners to maximise the benefits of building upgrades and developments on the Retail Quarter as a whole.
- Implement the Retail Quarter upgrade project to provide a more welcoming, safer and attractive streetscape.
- Identify priority laneways, alleyways and other open spaces for potential development of more publicly accessible areas and opportunities for commerce in conjunction with the private sector.
- Develop plans for key DCC-owned spaces and buildings to increase their accessibility and integration with the Retail Quarter and/or provision of better quality public open space (e.g., the DCC building, Dunedin City Library, Library Plaza, Albion Lane, Great King Street car park) in any future upgrades.
- Implement increased opportunities for play and events in the Retail Quarter, particularly focused on attracting families and young people
- Embrace opportunities for increased public art across a range of scales and media throughout the Retail Quarter.

Indicators

- Increased number of events
- Improved % satisfaction in Residents Opinion Survey satisfaction with the central city
- Increased number of young people and families visiting the Retail Quarter

Where to next?

We are seeking feedback on the draft Retail Quarter Revitalisation Plan.

This feedback will be used to help refine this Plan.

We are keen to hear your ideas and about opportunities or issues we have missed.

Letting us know at an early stage about any potential for collaboration or partnerships would also be valuable.

The Revitalisation Plan will be a 'living document' that will evolve over time as changes occur in the Retail Quarter, particularly as the amenity and infrastructure upgrades progress.