

24 May 2021

File Ref: 01-63-102-2

Doc No: RDC-1135336

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Hon Kris Faafoi  
Minister of Justice  
Parliament Office  
Private Bay 18888  
Parliamentary Buildings  
Wellington 6160

Mail to: [k.faafoi@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:k.faafoi@ministers.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe Minister,

### **Relocation of the Rotorua Court House to support our Inner City Revitalisation**

I am writing on behalf of Rotorua Lakes Council in regard to our Inner City Revitalisation project and planned redevelopment of the Rotorua District Court.

Our council is asking you consider our proposal to move the Rotorua Court House to a more suitable location within the inner city to support inner city revitalisation, and drive economic growth in Rotorua.

Along with achieving strategic outcomes, this proposal will give the Ministry of Justice the opportunity to build New Zealand's first wooden Court House through a partnership with Te Arawa Lakes Trust.

Please find attached a proposal memorandum outlining how an 'All-of-Government' approach achieves a number of strategic outcomes for both Central Government and Rotorua. I have discussed this proposal with Hon Stuart Nash, the Minister of Economic and Regional Development and Minister of Forestry, to further support an 'All-of-Government' approach.

Thank you for considering this information,

Nāku noa, nā

Hon Steve Chadwick JP  
Mayor



# Memorandum

**ROTORUA**  
LAKES COUNCIL

<b>Date:</b>	25 MAY 2021		
<b>File No:</b>	01-63-102-2	<b>Doc No:</b>	RDC-1135357
<b>To:</b>	HON MINISTER FAAFOI - MINISTER OF JUSTICE		
<b>From:</b>	JEAN-PAUL GASTON – DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE – DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT		
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Relocation of the Rotorua Court House to support our Inner City Revitalisation</b>		

## 1. HE TONO PROPOSAL

This memorandum proposes a collaborative 'All-of-Government' approach to support:

- the Rotorua inner city revitalisation (local economic development),
- development of an exemplar wooden building by Government, and
- planned redevelopment of the Rotorua Courts leveraging Iwi and Council partnerships.

## 2. TE TUHINGA WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This proposal is focussed on relocating the Rotorua District Court to a more suitable location within the Rotorua inner city in order to more effectively use the space that it currently occupies. Rotorua Lakes Council understands Minister of Justice (MOJ) is considering options on the future of the Rotorua District Court buildings with a business case being developed over the remainder of the year in preparation for a cabinet decision early 2022.

RLC has identified a site that meets the MOJ's requirements and has secured agreement from the owner, Te Arawa Lakes Trust, to either sell or lease the site. However, Te Arawa Lakes Trust are keen to move on the site now and delays may mean the potential opportunity is lost. Currently there are no other realistic alternative options.

Collaboration concerning this initiative will deliver a number of objectives for both Central Government and Rotorua, namely to:

- Deliver a fit-for-purpose Rotorua District Court House, in an ideal inner city location, through existing government funding;
- Deliver an opportunity for New Zealand's first 'Wood First' Court House as an exemplar development bordering the Rotorua inner city 'park to park' corridor – supporting Minister Nash's Future of Forestry vision;
- Enable RLC to deliver on the Inner City Revitalisation Plan and create a dynamic and vibrant civic plaza;
- Enable MoJ to partner with Te Arawa Lakes Trust via a commercial relationship - supporting Te Arawa to achieve their aspirations;
- Support regional economic development and delivery of several actions within RLC's Economic Development Strategy (EDS).

If in agreement with the proposal, RLC would welcome the opportunity to work with MoJ to deliver the wider strategic outcomes. In addition, RLC will examine options to enhance the adjoining street to support the new court and create the ‘park to park’ corridor envisaged in the Inner City revitalisation framework.

#### **4. TE TĀHUHU BACKGROUND**

In December 2020, RLC adopted a DRAFT EDS and the three key priority sector focus areas in Rotorua are Forestry, Tourism, and being ready for business. RLC and Rotorua Economic Development (RED) Ltd are leading the delivery of the majority of the actions in this regard, with the support of key local, regional and Central Government partners. The completion of the major place-making developments are key actions to be delivered.

A key action is to advance a vibrant city centre, specifically:

- 1) Build investment and development confidence in the CBD through an Inner City Plan and targeted incentives.
- 2) Partner with major investors and developers to establish two place making CBD projects that support inner city residential living.
- 3) Partner with Central Government to ensure investment supports city vibrancy resilience.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Minister Nash announced, Te Uru Rakau was to be renamed as ‘Te Uru Rakau – The New Zealand Forest Service’ and the operational headquarters will be based in Rotorua. Minister Nash provided an overview of his vision for the Future of Forestry<sup>1</sup> and indicated future government builds will follow a wood-base government procurement policy. The Ministry for Primary Industry’s ‘Fit for a Better World’<sup>2</sup> roadmap highlights the potential to accelerate forestry’s contribution to New Zealand’s economy. Opportunities include increasing the production and use of wood-based construction material for both the domestic and export markets. The Rotorua District has been consistently viewed as a long-term advocate for the use of wood in construction, adopting a “Wood First” policy in 2015<sup>3</sup> to embed this further.

Through our EDS we are focused on “Wood First”, specifically:

- 1) Review RLC Wood First Policy to look at how we incentivise the utilisation of wood products.
- 2) Work at a national level to advocate for increased timber use through reference sites and case studies.
- 3) Establish a showcase cross-laminated timber (CLT) building.

Rotorua, like many cities, is facing changes in consumer behaviour and purchasing preferences leading to increased commercial and retail vacancies in the inner city. With exciting major place-making developments underway e.g. the lakefront redevelopment, RLC recognises there is an opportunity to enhance the role of the inner city, as the “heart” of the city.

The proposal, to build New Zealand’s first “Wood-First” Court House in a more suitable inner city location, gives effect to all the actions outlined above, supports development in Rotorua and will drive economic growth.

#### **5. KŌRERORERO**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-04/Future%20of%20Forestry%20Booklet.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/about-mpi/our-work/fit-for-a-better-world-accelerating-our-economic-potential/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rotorualakescouncil.nz/our-council/news/Pages/default.aspx?newsItem=6113>

## DISCUSSION

RLC is aware the Rotorua District Court is requiring significant refurbishment and/or redevelopment in the near future. The Court's current location is in the centre of our inner city and bordering a proposed civic plaza. We therefore propose that the MoJ considers relocating the Court House to a more suitable location within the Inner City.

RED has had discussions with Te Arawa Management Ltd (the economic arm of Te Arawa Lakes Trust) and have identified a location that we support as being a more suitable location, which they are actively considering to redevelop and/or sell. In line with the Rotorua focus on promoting the wood sector, the relocation of the Court House, provides an opportunity for MoJ to partner with Te Arawa, to deliver New Zealand's first "Wood First" Court House bordering our proposed inner city 'green' corridor. See Appendix 1 for a map outlining the relocation.

### ROTORUA INNER CITY REVITALISATION PLAN

Over the past year, RLC has been working on the development of a transformational Inner City Revitalisation Plan (The Plan). The proposed vision is:

*"To establish a vibrant and safe inner city known for its rich heritage, city living, entertainment and as a great place to work".*

The mission is to develop an inner city within the Rotorua City Centre, that:

- Reflects Te Arawa culture and natural identity.
- Has a vibrant mix of uses and activities and successful commercial experiences.
- Is a people-focussed locality which is safe and attractive to residents, visitors, businesses, and investors.
- Is known as a great place to work and the place for city living and world-class amenity.

High level outcomes have also been defined and they are as follows:

1. A greater number of apartments are developed increasing access to a broader variety/diversity of housing typologies in the District.
2. District land and resources are used efficiently while reducing our impact on the environment.
3. The inner city is vibrant, thriving, prosperous and accessible.
4. The inner city streets, public spaces and new developments are distinct, well designed and reflects the stories of Mana Whenua, Te Arawa culture and natural identity.
5. The inner city supports a healthy, safe and connected community.

The Plan involves reducing the size of the inner city and focussing on key inner city corridors to focus change with a defined space enabling greater impact. Tūtānekai Street, that links the lakefront to the central mall, is the inner city spine or the natural 'High' Street and key catalyst for the Rotorua inner city revitalization. The park-to-park corridor is a proposed 'green' connection between Hinemaru Street and Ranolf Street and between Arawa Street and Haupapa Street connecting two significant green spaces Kuirau Park and Government Gardens.

In line with the Rotorua Climate Change Action Plan<sup>4</sup>, RLC is focused on supporting a walk-and-cycle friendly

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<sup>4</sup> <https://letstalk.rotorualakescouncil.nz/mahere-tauhohe-huarere-rotorua-climate-action-plan/widgets/308606/documents>

environment and decreasing the cars and car parks within the inner city. To bring the inner city to life, we are looking to develop special character precincts. The area between Arawa Street and Haupapa Street (currently where the District Court is located), is proposed as the future Arts precinct. As this is the nexus between the north-south link- along Tūtānekai Street, and the east-west 'park-to-park' link, we are proposing this area to be developed as civic plaza. It is further proposed that the dining precinct (which includes Eat Street) from Whakaue Street and Arawa Street, and focus on a retail precinct between Haupapa Street and Amohau Street (including the night market on Thursday and Farmers Market at Te Manawa on Sundays).

For more information on our Inner City Revitalisation Plan Development, please refer to our engagement presentation in Appendix 2.

### ROTORUA DISTRICT COURT PROPOSAL

RLC understands MOJ is considering options on the future of the Rotorua District Court buildings with a business case being developed over the remainder of the year in preparation for a cabinet decision early 2022.

Te Arawa Lakes trust owns the sites located at 1188 – 1196 Haupapa Street through to 1191 Pukuatua Street. The Pukuatua street property is currently vacant and Te Arawa Lakes Trust via their commercial entity Te Arawa Management Ltd have been investigating options to sell or redevelop the site.

RED has discussed the proposed site with MoJ and outlined the potential opportunity to Te Arawa Management Ltd. RED has been trying to facilitate commercial engagement between the two parties, however limited progress has been realised to date. There is an increasing risk that the site may be lost due to other development opportunities, and the potential benefits outlined in relation to this proposed relocation will be lost.

Minster Nash's vision for a wood-based government procurement focus, aligns with the strengths of Rotorua in relation to the timber industry and the "Wood First" policy, therefore we propose the new Court House be developed using locally sourced New Zealand timber. As part of RLC's "Wood First" policy review and leadership in this area, RLC will use this build as a flagship inner city revitalisation project, which will equally serve as a detailed case study in relation to implementing the policy.

This proposal will deliver the following outcomes:

- A new fit-for-purpose Rotorua District Court House in an ideal inner city location, through existing government funding.
- New Zealand's first 'Wood First' Court House, an exemplar development bordering the Rotorua inner city 'green' corridor – supporting Minister Nash's 'Future of Forestry' vision;
- An opportunity for Central Government to enter into a commercial relationship with Te Arawa which help Māori achieve their commercial aspirations.
- The achievement of EDS Action 11.2, which is for RLC to partner with Central Government to ensure investment supports city vibrancy and resilience.

### OTHER INNER CITY PROJECTS

If the Court House is successfully relocated a space will become available on the former courthouse site that would assist the RLC in establishing the proposed civic plaza and provide a site for further Government

building development.

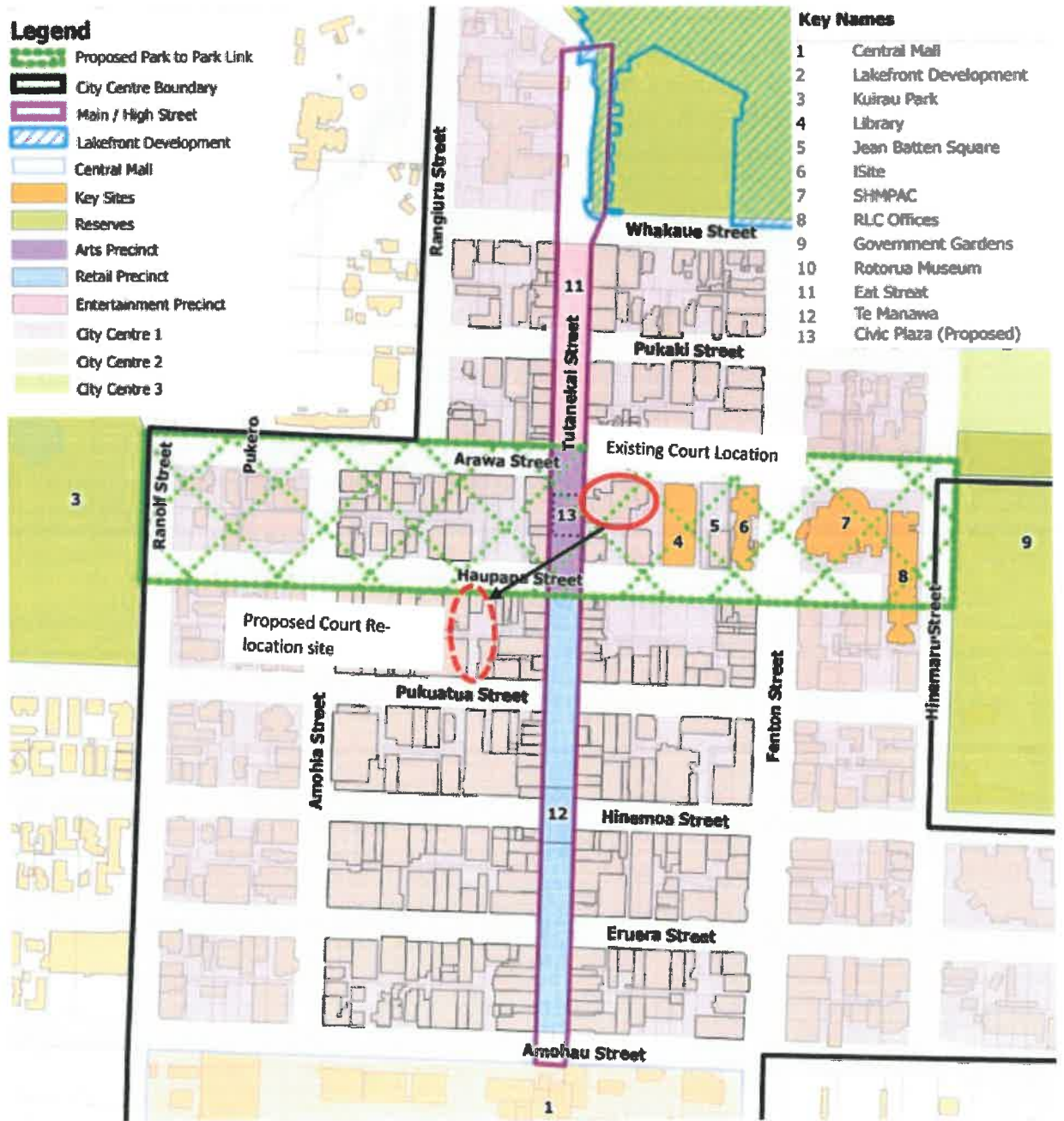
The civic plaza has been conceptualised as a public space where the citizens of Rotorua can connect, play and be entertained. With the support of RLC, the community will contribute to the design and development of the space, events will be run and a new sense of community ownership will be ideally develop. We have pitched to Hon. Minister Nash the vacant space would make an ideal choice a future 'Ministry for Tourism', further supporting regional development and driving economic growth.

## **6. TE ARA KAI MUA WAY FORWARD**

The next steps are proposed as follows:

1. MoJ enters into commercial negotiations with Te Arawa Lakes Trust – support from RED, if required. This may include developing a holding strategy on the proposed new site.
2. RLC continues Inner City Revitalisation Plan work and works with MoJ and any consenting requirements and street development requirements to support future operations on the site.

APPENDIX 1





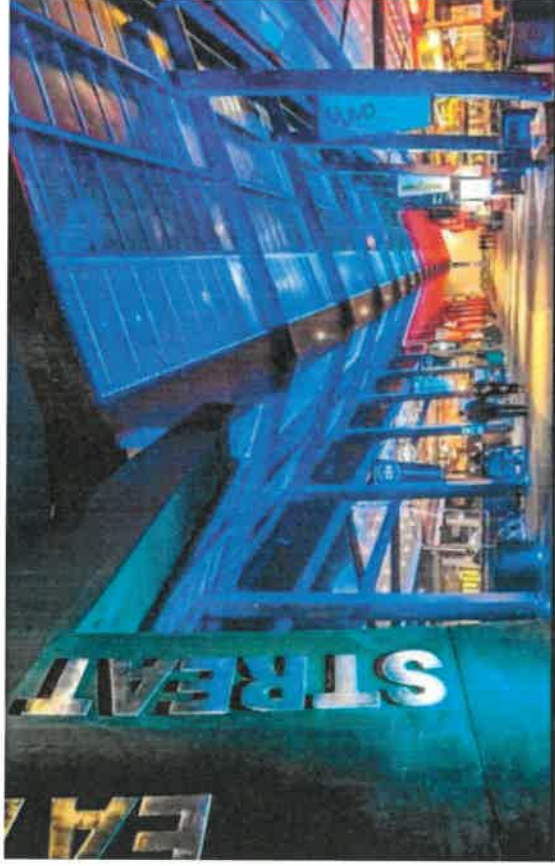
**APPENDIX 2**



050521 Inner City  
Revitalisation Plan\_5



# Inner City Revitalisation Plan Development



**ROTORUA**  
LAKES COUNCIL

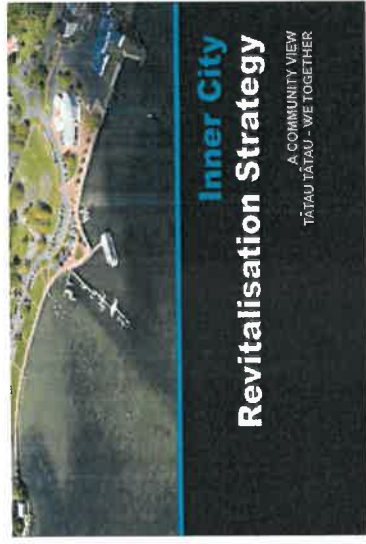
May 2021

# Direction is set by key work completed to date

Vision 2030 Strategy (2013)



Inner city revitalization strategy (2015)



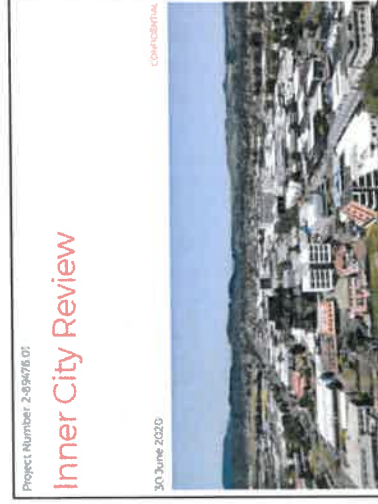
RED sector groups (2020)

Plan	Activate	Invest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision for vibrancy / exec summary</li> <li>• Cultural design - Ngāiwi Whākehe involvement</li> <li>• Develop design guidelines</li> <li>• Correct green corridor</li> <li>• Policy changes that reduce CBD core and increases spread, increases density and encourages mixed use developments, creates new precincts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takawa champions (retail support activation strategies and CBD management partnership)</li> <li>• Eight boating hearts (provide significant attractions in CBD)</li> <li>• Amplify existing activity (omnis strategy)</li> <li>• Create distinct precincts</li> <li>• Increase paving / landscape width</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court</li> <li>• Encourage inner city living / residential development (feasibility study)</li> <li>• Incentives and policy</li> <li>• Limit the size of the CBD</li> <li>• Select a panel to oversee design guidelines</li> <li>• Collate current data for the CBD including occupancy, value, cost, capacity, transport, activity, retail spend, population and safety</li> </ul>



DCA stock take (2020/21)

Inner city transport network review (2020)





# DCA Stock Take/ Previous City Centre

## Initiatives

- Key recommendations for next steps:
  - Delivery of a clear strategy & vision
  - Delivery plan with short-term actions
  - Identification of key moves/ long-term projects to enable change.
- Focused & coordinated approach – Return of the main/ high street concept- Tūtānekai Street as the



ROTORUA  
INNER CITY

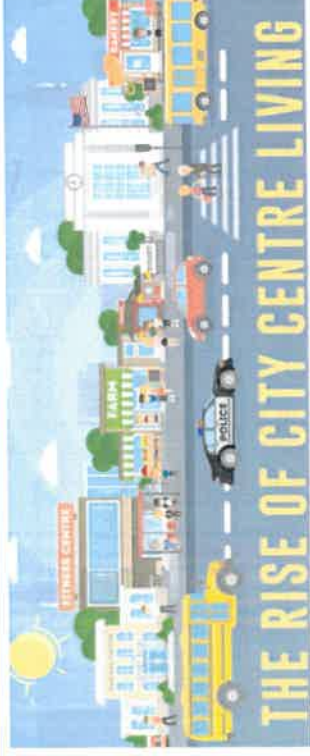
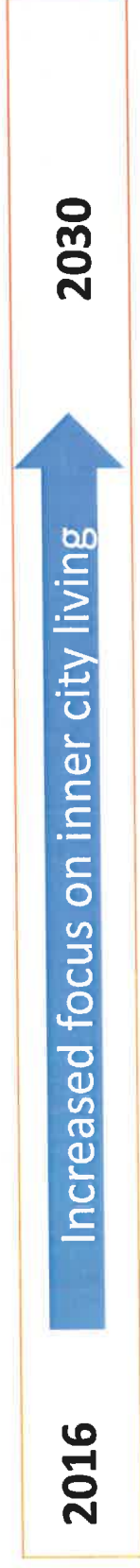
REVIEW OF  
REVITALISATION  
INITIATIVES  
2006-2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



*Carnival float, Tūtānekai Street, 1930*

# Revitalisation Focus on Inner City



Vision: “To establish a vibrant and safe inner city known for its rich heritage, city living, entertainment and as a great place to work”



The Inner City broadly showing area of revitalization focus



# High Level Outcomes

## **Outcome 1:**

**A greater number of apartments are developed increasing access to a broader variety/ diversity of housing typologies in the District**

## **Outcome 3:**

**The inner city is vibrant, thriving, prosperous and accessible**



## **Outcome 4:**

**The inner city streets, public spaces and new developments are distinct, well designed and reflects our unique Te Arawa culture and natural identity**



## **Outcome 5:**

**The inner city supports a healthy, safe and connected community**



## **Outcome 2:**

**District Land and resources are used efficiently while reducing our impact on the environment**



# Focus on key Corridors

- Tūtānekai Street natural main street- the key N-S link btwn the lakefront & the Central Mall
- Park to Park Corridor is a proposed 'green' connection.
- Connects the Government Garden reserve with the Kuirau Park Reserve
- Maori stewardship & the environment, climate change awareness, sustainable living & promoting wood first







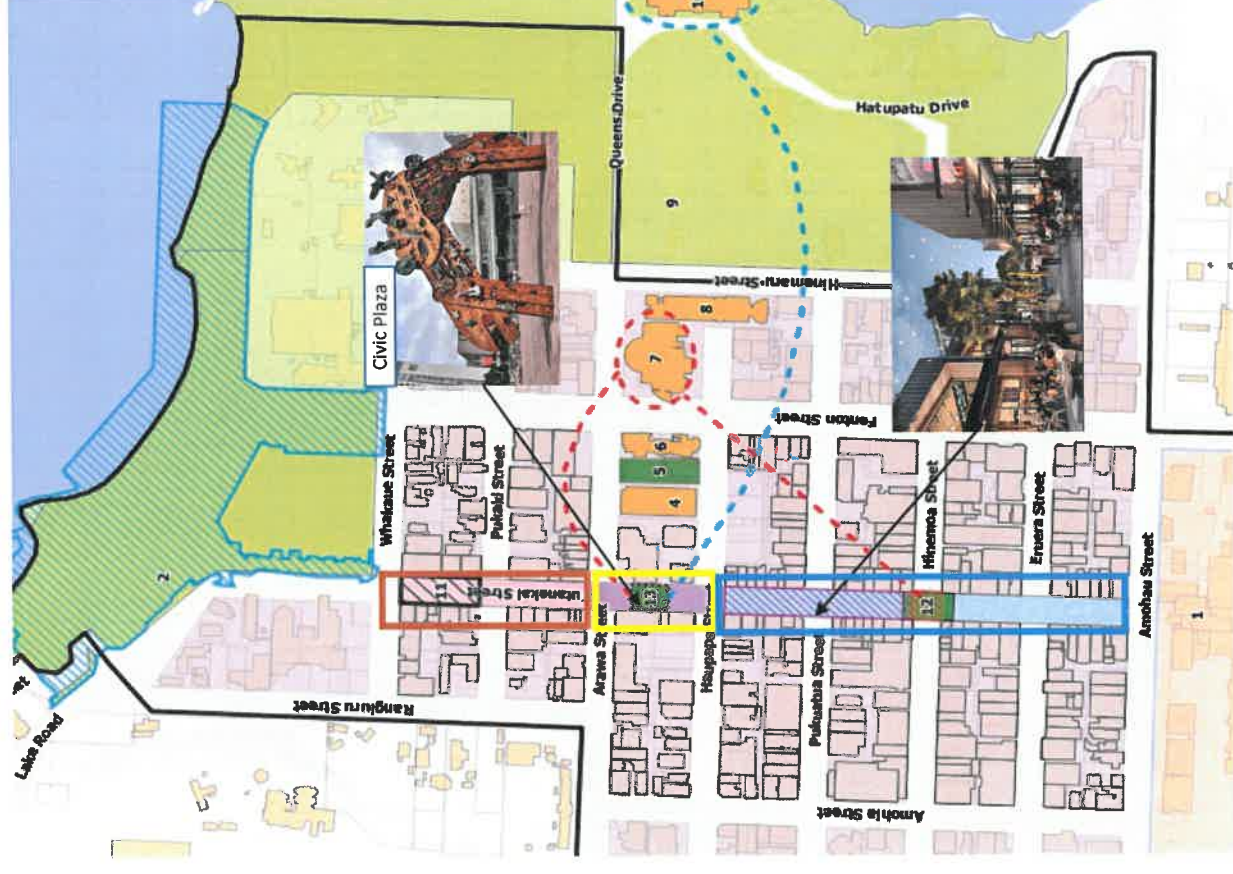
# Character Precincts & Civic Plaza

Development of special character precincts:

Dining precinct btwn Whakaue St & Arawa St. - includes Eat Street

Arts precinct btwn Arawa and Haupapa St. - includes proposed civic plaza

Retail precinct btwn Haupapa St. & Amohau St. - incl. the night market and Farmers Market at Te Manawa  
Creation of a Civic Plaza- inner-city arts events in tandem with a potential destination attraction (E.g. Public Sculpture)







# Limit the size of Inner City & Residential Intensification

Limit on the size of the inner city to focus on change (inner city living) either side of the main street

Incentivise mixed used development along main street (residential & tourist accommodation with commercial)

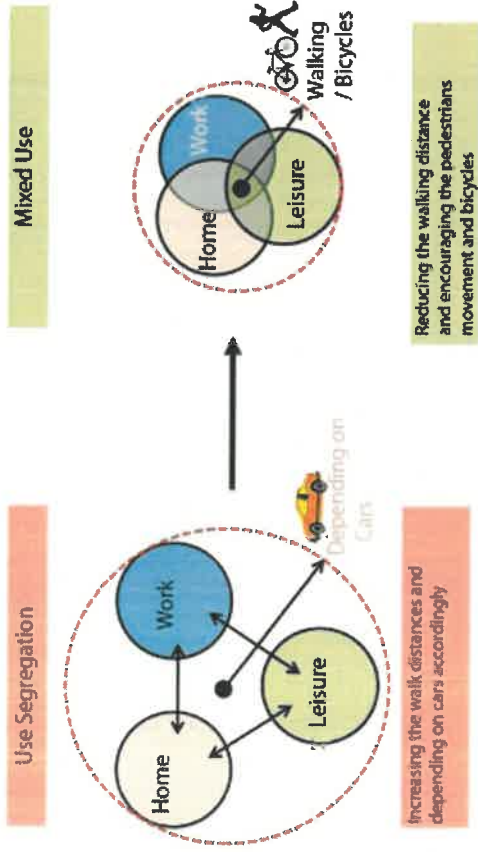
Residential development (e.g. apartments) resulting in intensification- yellow blocks





# Develop an Incentives Policy

- Incentives e.g. rates remission to encourage mixed use development & residential intensification in the inner city



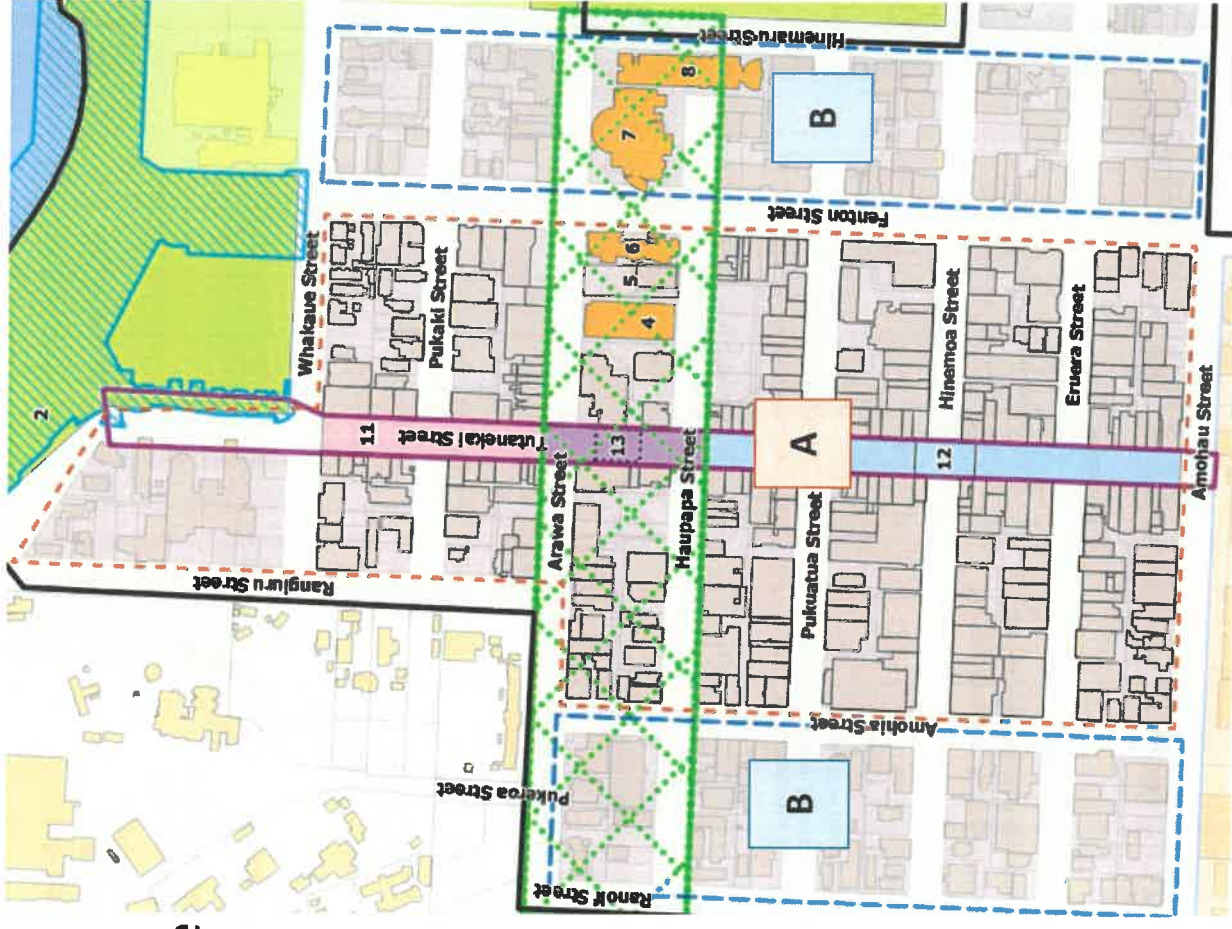
For Example:

## Policy Area A

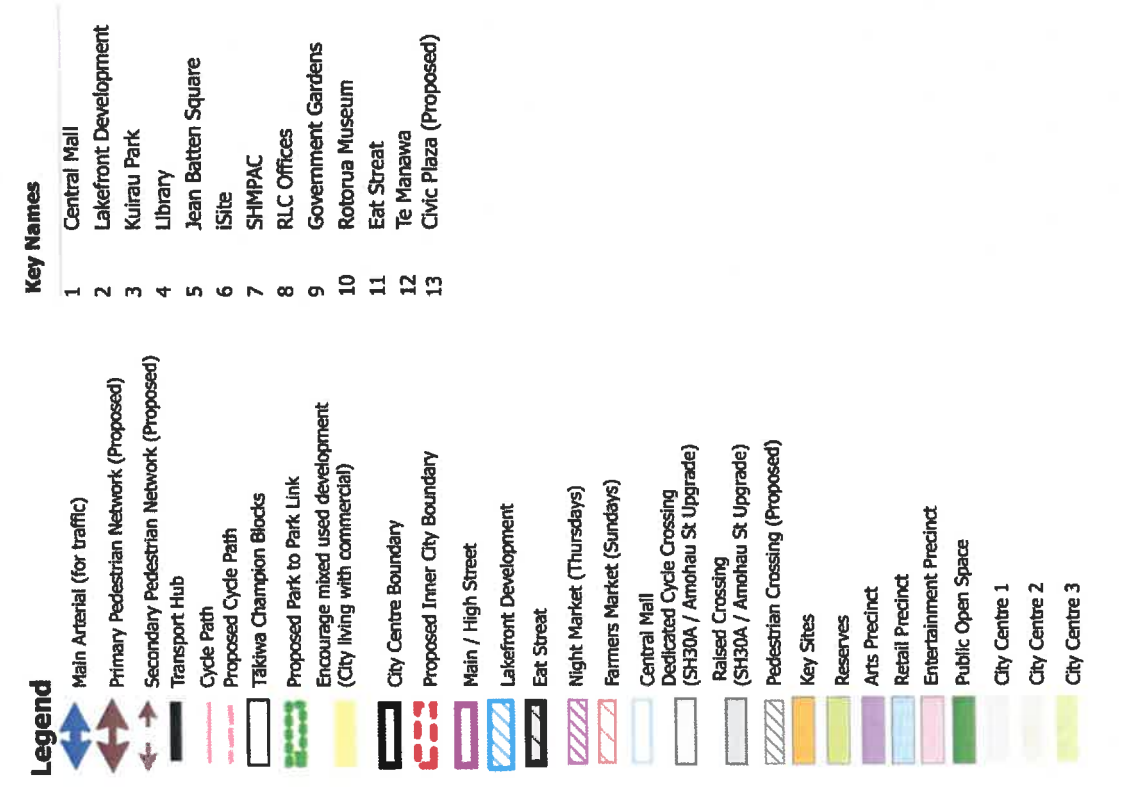
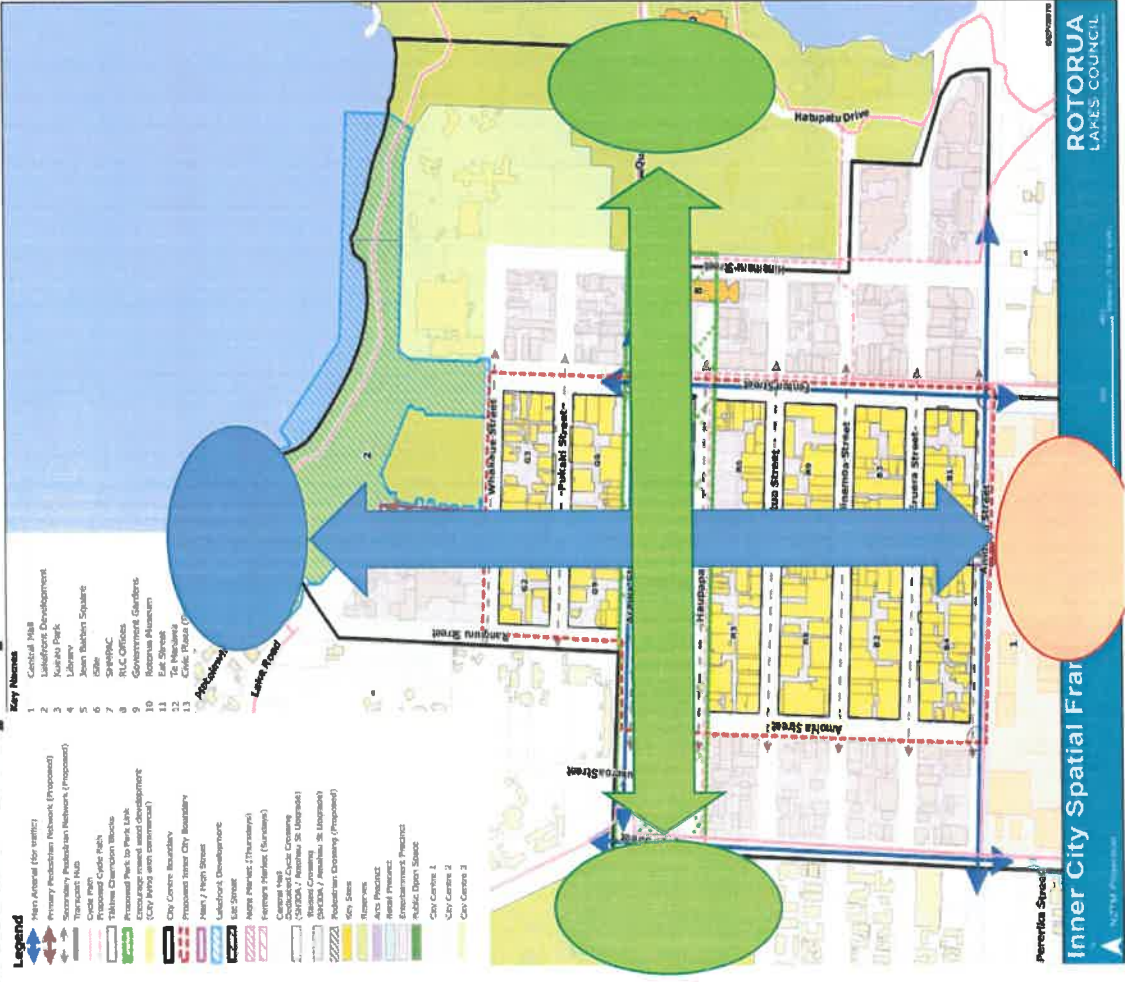
Incentivise office and residential apartments & accommodation- e.g. residential apartments & tourist accommodation

## Policy Area B

Incentivise residential accommodation only



# Inner City Spatial Framework (with Tūtānekai Street at the Centre)





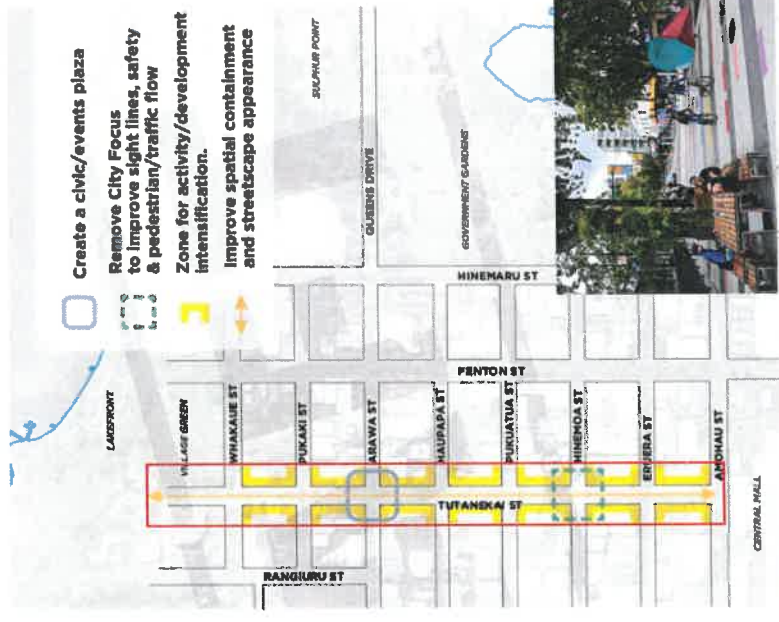
# Defined Urban Outcomes in a Design Guide

- Retain & promote our unique cultural and natural heritage
- Improves perception, image and visual quality of inner city
- Unifies development proposals (public & private)
- Helps achieve a high quality urban environment
- Develops line of sight & the consent planners a reference point



# Spatial Containment on Main Street

- Spatial containment along main street
- Outside the golden ratio of street width to building height
- Wide streets in relation to building height- streets feel open and empty even when busy
- Strategies to be considered to create a sense of containment





# Marketing and Investment

- 'City as a destination' Investment Promotion Plan & Marketing Strategy – focused on inner city
- Activation Plan (incl. tactical urbanism initiatives) with a calendar of events to influence vibrancy
- Aligned to emerging Rotorua place brand and investment approach, Destination Management Plan and Events Strategy



# A Comprehensive Response

What does the Revitalisation Plan look like:

1. A Spatial Framework with a Vision- Define a 3, 10 and 30 year picture of change
2. Redefined Inner City Extent- Consolidate Change & maximise impact
3. Renewed focus on Key Corridors- Enable & Sustain Change
4. Established Network of Public Spaces and Places
5. Develop Thematic Character Precincts- Focus change & stimulate vibrancy
6. Incentivise Residential Living- Intensification Plan Change & Incentives Policy
7. Roading & Sustainable Transport Plan- Gives priority to pedestrians and cycling
8. Urban Design Guide- Establish Cultural Foundations and desired urban outcomes
9. Activation Plan-To support Vibrancy
10. Marketing & Investment Plan- Inner City as a 'destination'
11. Key packaged Projects- short, medium & long (key moves)
12. Indicators to Measure Change (Profile)

## Next Steps

- Engagement on Spatial Framework with Partners & Stakeholders-  
*Underway*
- Develop Cultural Foundations & Design Guide-*Underway*
- Develop Incentives Policy – Encourage City Living-*Underway*
- Develop Draft Inner City Revitalisation Delivery Plan
- Consult on the Draft Plan



# Memorandum

**ROTORUA**  
LAKES COUNCIL

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<b>To:</b>	HON STUART NASH – MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF FORESTRY		
<b>From:</b>	JEAN-PAUL GASTON – DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE – DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT		
<b>Subject:</b>	All-of-Government Approach - Rotorua Inner City Revitalisation 'Wood First' Proposal		

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4. The inner city streets, public spaces and new developments are distinct, well designed and reflects the stories of Mana Whenua, Te Arawa culture and natural identity.
5. The inner city supports a healthy, safe and connected community.

The Plan involves reducing the size of the inner city and focussing on key inner city corridors to focus change with a defined space enabling greater impact. Tūtānekai Street, that links the lakefront to the central mall, is the inner city spine or the natural 'High' Street and key catalyst for the Rotorua inner city revitalization. The park-to-park corridor is a proposed 'green' connection between Hinemaru Street and Ranolf Street and between Arawa Street and Haupapa Street connecting two significant green spaces Kuirau Park and Government Gardens.

In line with the Rotorua Climate Change Action Plan<sup>4</sup>, RLC is focused on supporting a walk-and-cycle friendly

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<sup>4</sup> <https://letstalk.rotorualakescouncil.nz/mahere-tauhohe-huarere-rotorua-climate-action->

environment and decreasing the cars and car parks within the inner city. To bring the inner city to life, we are looking to develop special character precincts. The area between Arawa Street and Haupapa Street (currently where the District Court is located), is proposed as the future Arts precinct. As this is the nexus between the north-south link- along Tūtaneke Street, and the east-west 'park-to-park' link, we are proposing this area to be developed as civic plaza. It is further proposed that the dining precinct (which includes Eat Street) from Whakauke Street and Arawa Street, and focus on a retail precinct between Haupapa Street and Amohau Street (including the night market on Thursday and Farmers Market at Te Manawa on Sundays).

For more information on our Inner City Revitalisation Plan Development, please refer to our engagement presentation in Appendix 2.

### ROTORUA DISTRICT COURT PROPOSAL

RLC understands MOJ is considering options on the future of the Rotorua District Court buildings with a business case being developed over the remainder of the year in preparation for a cabinet decision early 2022.

Te Arawa Lakes Trust owns the sites located at 1188 – 1196 Haupapa Street through to 1191 Pukuatua Street. The Pukuatua street property is currently vacant and Te Arawa Lakes Trust via their commercial entity Te Arawa Management Ltd have been investigating options to sell or redevelop the site.

RED has discussed the proposed site with MoJ and outlined the potential opportunity to Te Arawa Management Ltd. RED has been trying to facilitate commercial engagement between the two parties, however limited progress has been realised to date. There is an increasing risk that the site may be lost due to other development opportunities, and the potential benefits outlined in relation to this proposed relocation will be lost.

Minster Nash's vision for a wood-based government procurement focus, aligns with the strengths of Rotorua in relation to the timber industry and the "Wood First" policy, therefore we propose the new Court House be developed using locally sourced New Zealand timber. As part of RLC's "Wood First" policy review and leadership in this area, RLC will use this build as a flagship inner city revitalisation project, which will equally serve as a detailed case study in relation to implementing the policy.

This proposal will deliver the following outcomes:

- A new fit-for-purpose Rotorua District Court House in an ideal inner city location, through existing government funding.
- New Zealand's first 'Wood First' Court House, an exemplar development bordering the Rotorua inner city 'green' corridor – supporting Minister Nash's Wood-Based Government Procurement programme and 'Future of Forestry' vision;
- An opportunity for Central Government to enter into a commercial relationship with Te Arawa which help Māori achieve their commercial aspirations.
- The achievement of EDS Action 11.2, which is for RLC to partner with Central Government to ensure investment supports city vibrancy and resilience.
- Support RLC to deliver EDS Action 6.0 and 6.1, which is to review RLC Wood First Policy to look at how we incentivise the utilisation of wood products and work at a national level to advocate for increased domestic timber use through reference sites and case studies.



## OTHER INNER CITY PROJECTS

If the Court House is successfully relocated a space will become available on the former courthouse site that would assist the RLC in establishing the proposed civic plaza. The civic plaza been conceptualised as a public space where the citizens of Rotorua can connect, play and be entertained. With the support of RLC, the community will contribute to the design and development of the space, events will be run and a new sense of community ownership will be ideally develop.

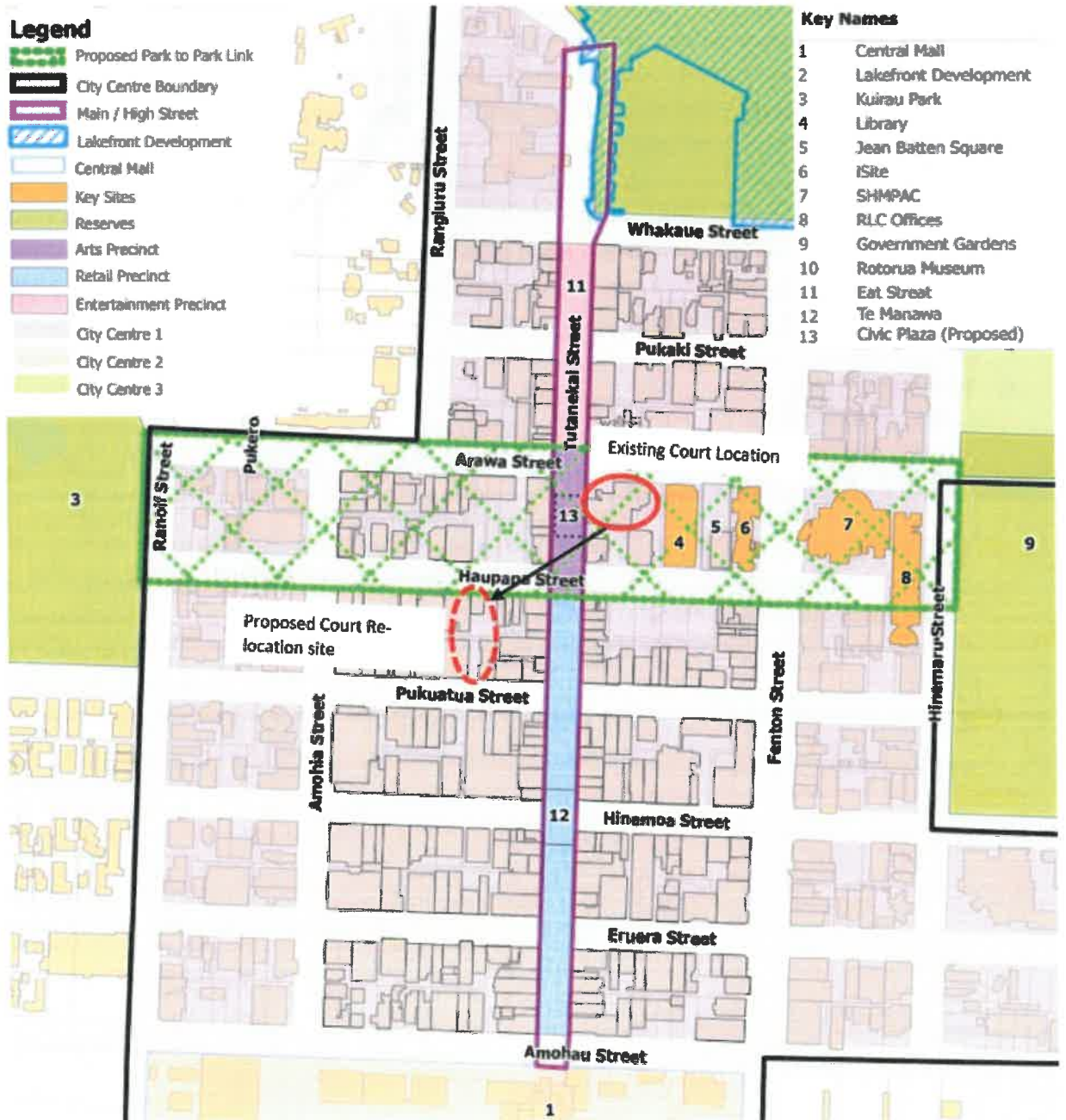
It would also provide a site for further Government building development. With Rotorua being the birthplace of tourism, the first bilingual city in New Zealand, Te Ao Māori part of our DNA, we believe Rotorua and this vacant space, would also make the ideal choice for a future 'Ministry for Tourism', further supporting regional development and driving economic growth.

## **6. TE ARA KAI MUA WAY FORWARD**

The next steps are proposed as follows:

1. RLC obtains agreement from the Minister Faafoi (Minister of Justice) to move forward with the proposal with support from Minister Nash. This may include developing a holding strategy on the proposed new site.
2. MoJ enters into commercial negotiations with Te Arawa Lakes Trust – support provided by RED, if required.
3. RLC continues Inner City Revitalisation Plan work and works with MoJ and any consenting requirements and street development requirements to support future operations on the site.

APPENDIX 1



**APPENDIX 2**



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Revitalisation Plan\_5