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Downtown neighbourhood update



13 April 2026,

Kia ora koutou,

We hope you've enjoyed a lovely summer season.

As autumn settles in, there's plenty happening across the area, from a diverse programme of events and activities to the recent renovation of the iconic Queens Arcade on lower Queen Street. With the Waitematā Station Plaza now complete, [check out this video](#) showcasing the transformation of a more vibrant and connected station neighbourhood.

Following the success of our summer lunchtime music programme at Queens Wharf Village, we're pleased to continue live DJs during lunchtimes (Tue-Fri) through the autumn months, keeping energy and vibrancy flowing.

Ngā mihi,

Auckland Urban Development Office

Questions? Contact us



Queen's Arcade set for major upgrade

One of downtown Auckland's most loved heritage spaces, Queens Arcade, has recently started works to undergo a significant upgrade as part of its next chapter. The multi-million-dollar refresh will restore and elevate the historic arcade as a two-level luxury retail and wellness destination. Check out this recent video by Heart of the City.

The upgrade will see Queens Arcade close for a period during construction. As highlighted in The Spinoff, many of the arcade's much-loved retailers are making moves to relocate to different locations as this iconic space prepares for its next phase.

With its planned upgrade, Queens Arcade joins a number of other established inner-city arcades that have undergone or currently undergoing significant renewal.

Image: Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 1477-2321



Downtown electric ferry charging project

Auckland Transport (AT) is replacing the current aged ferry fleet in a staged approach to modernise and standardise vessels, plus reduce diesel emissions.

As part of the fleet renewal, AT is introducing low emission ferries powered by locally generated electricity, with an initial focus on inner and mid-harbour routes. Two electric and two electric-hybrid ferries are on order initially.

To support this transition, AT is installing a charger building on Queens Wharf north of

Shed 10 and electrical cables underneath the wharf. The charger building will deliver power to Piers 2, 4, and 5 so that ferry batteries can be topped up during the offloading and onboarding of passengers.

Since work began in October 2025, AT has installed scaffolding under-wharf to hold electrical cables and have now begun construction of the charger building.

From early April to around September 2026, AT will work on Piers 4 and 5 installing charging equipment. During this time the piers will remain in service, but access will be via the gangway to Piers 6 and 7. Signs will direct passengers where to go.

In mid-2026, AT plans to undertake work on Quay Street to connect their electrical cables to Vector's network. In late 2026, they plan to start installing charging equipment on Pier 2. The project completion date is scheduled for mid 2027.

Electric ferries

The first of two 24-metre, 200-passenger electric ferries has successfully completed manufacturer performance trials, and are awaiting final sign-off and handover to AT in the coming months.

After handover to AT, crew training and final maritime approvals can be completed before entry into service. The intention is to trial the electric ferries across different passenger routes during 2026, to gain experience before they join the Half Moon Bay to Downtown ferry service.

The second sistership electric ferry completed physical construction at the shipyard in Mount Wellington earlier this year. It has now commenced the initial phase of shipyard testing on the Tāmaki River and using AT's charger at Half Moon Bay.

Who to contact

For enquiries, please contact 09 366 6400 or email info@at.govt.nz

More info here



Work is underway to replace two escalators at Waitemātā Station (East) located in the Takutai Atrium, improving reliability and accessibility for station users. The escalators are being upgraded as they've reached the end of their service life, with works running from 9 March through to June 2026.

To minimise disruption, most heavy works will take place overnight, with access maintained via nearby lifts and stairs and temporary wayfinding in place. Short periods of noise are expected around Takutai Square and Gore Street, with all areas reopening each morning.

[Click here to view the notification letter](#)



Meet your local Placemaker

Downtown Placemaker, Anders Falstie-Jensen, invites you down to Queens Wharf for a chat (and a snack!) about life in downtown Auckland. We will reflect on the summer gone by and talk about the months and years ahead.

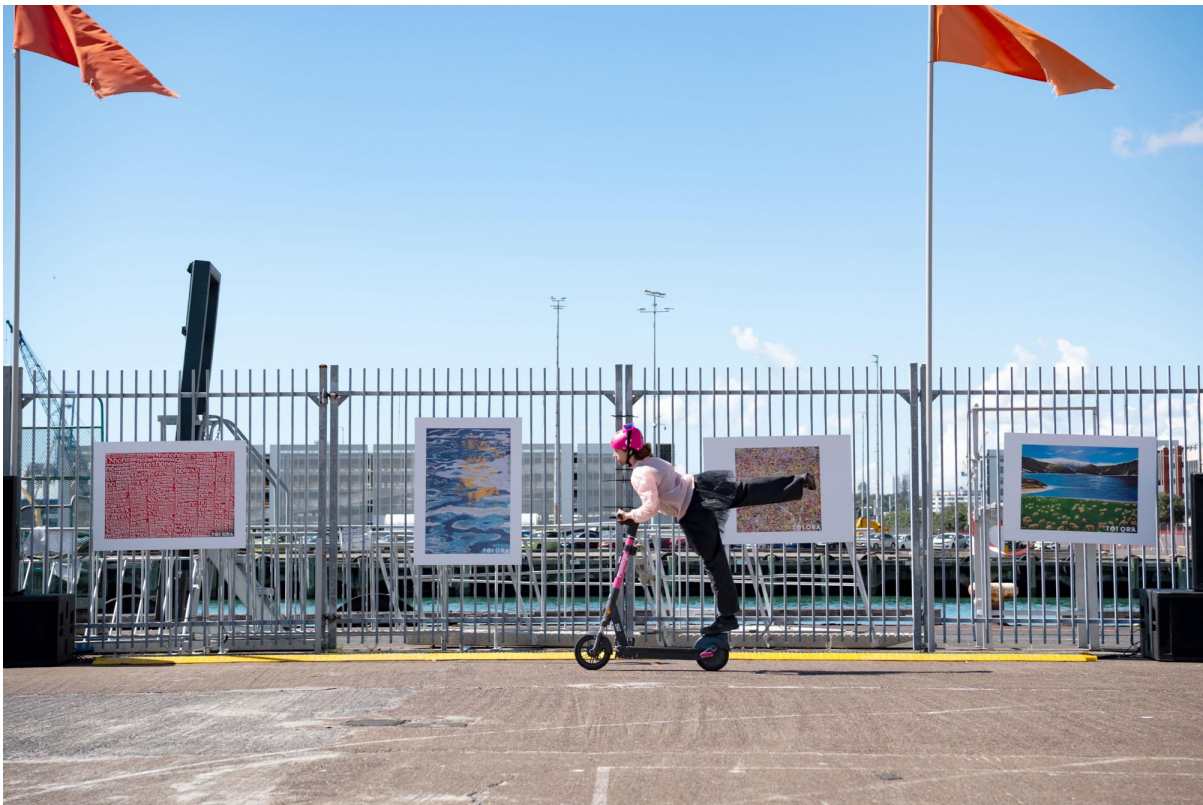
This is a chance to share any thoughts or observations about the area, hear updates on recent activity across Queen's Wharf and the city centre, and learn more about what's coming up over the next few months. Everyone is welcome.

Date: Monday 20 April

Time: 6-7:30pm

Location: Queens Wharf Container Village (inside venue if raining)

[RSVP directly to Anders here](#)



Queens Wharf Fenceline Exhibitions

Toi Ora exhibition

A new outdoor art exhibition is activating the Queens Wharf fenceline, bringing creative energy to the waterfront. Curated by Toi Ora, the exhibition showcases compelling photographic works that engage passersby and add colour and conversation to the public realm. On now until May.

Upcoming Exhibition: Auckland Festival of Photography

We're pleased to be part of the Auckland Festival of Photography (AFP), returning from 29 May to 14 June. This international festival celebrates photography across galleries, public spaces, and online platforms throughout the region.

More details on participating exhibitions and artists will be shared closer to the festival dates. Updates will be available via the [AFP website](#).



Red Bull Dance Your Style

Downtown is set to turn up the energy as Red Bull Dance Your Style brings freestyle street-dance battles to the city centre. Watch top local dancers face off in one-on-one battles, with the crowd deciding who takes the win. No choreography - just raw talent, big moves and great vibes.

When: Saturday 18 April

Event Starts: 6pm

Where: Queens Wharf

This is a free event and open to everyone.

More info here



What's happening around Takutai Square

Takutai Square is coming alive this autumn with a mix of free performances, arts and community events adding energy to downtown.

Highlights include cultural activations linked to the Aotearoa Art Fair and Auckland Writers Festival Waituhi o Tāmaki.

With pop-ups, markets and public events taking place throughout the season, there's always something happening around the square.

More details here



NZ Music Month Programme

To celebrate NZ Music Month in May, an all-ages programme of music, food, and creative activity will take place on Queen's Wharf.

Thursdays | 5–7pm

Enjoy an early evening mix of DJs playing 100% NZ music and freshly made pizzas.

Fridays | 6–8pm

Friday evenings will feature DJs, a pop-up food truck and small scale live music sets to kick off the weekend and draw people into the city centre.



Help clean up Beach Road

Come and help clean up Beach Road and nearby streets.

Earth Action Trust are organising a special clean-up and are calling on neighbours around this area to join them.

This is a fantastic way to meet local community, exchange ideas, get light exercise and most of all make a difference to our community and environment.

All cleaning tools will be provided and refreshment will be provided after the event.

Date: 17th May

Time: 10am-12noon

Location: Māhuhu-ki-te-rangi Park, 13-19 Mahuhu Crescent

Register here

Keep in touch!

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding as we work to create more vibrant and attractive spaces in our city centre.

Report a community safety or support issue.

For general questions or concerns, email us at citycentre@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

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