

Neighbourhood Conversation Walk

South East

A group of 18 people participated in a conversation walk around the 'South East' neighbourhood on 5 December 2020. The walk was led by Gwyn, a resident of the Central City who attends Ara Institute. This neighbourhood has a large cluster of education facilities, industrial services, and the former Catholic Diocese site. An identity is emerging as this neighbourhood becomes more established. A couple of unique businesses contribute to making this area a destination. A mix of current residents and people interested in Central City living participated in the walk. The main purpose of the walk was for Council staff to hear people's thoughts and experiences of the neighbourhood and discuss opportunities to enhance neighbourhood elements and character. Informally the walk also served as an opportunity for people to discover new spaces, talk with each other about Central City living and to make connections with like-minded people. Key spaces and observations by attendees are outlined below:



Neighbourhood Strengths

- A cluster of small unique businesses are operating in Boxed Quarter and in former industrial buildings on Southwark and St Asaph Street. These are very popular with students and help to create an identity.
- The neighbourhood has a wide range of education facilities including Ara Institute, Marian College (moving to Papanui), Cathedral College and Aspire International Campus.
- The area is well serviced with three main supermarkets along Moorhouse Avenue and grocery options at Bombay Bazaar and Mediterranean Food.
- A number of spaces are well used for events including night-time activation.
- The area has strong opportunity to evolve with some evidence of early momentum already.

Opportunities


- A large block of land, currently used by the Catholic Diocese and Red Bus could be made available for alternative uses such as residential.
- The stadium could be an opportunity to activate the surrounding streets and establish an identity of the south-east part of the inner city. The design of the stadium is crucial in activating the surrounding area. Having businesses that benefit residents on the ground floor would ensure there is activation all year round.
- This neighbourhood has an opportunity to grow to provide more residential options for students and young professionals wanting to be close to study, work, the stadium and the wide variety of businesses.
- This neighbourhood has an emerging identity that could be enhanced with a larger population and stronger connections.
- Opportunity to have better pedestrian/resident connections between Linwood, Phillipstown and the Central City by enhancing the streetscapes along Tuam or St Asaph Streets.
- Involve residents in the planning of the Canterbury Multi-Use Arena whilst exploring placemaking ideas with residents whilst construction is underway.
- In order to attract more residents and encourage people to walk and cycle, streetscapes need a higher level of amenity with street trees and more open space. Amenity is currently very industrial, car-focussed and unfriendly.


Residents Points of Interest


The following spaces were some of the main points of interest on the walk led by a local resident of the South East Neighbourhood.



Key spaces

1

 Canterbury Multi-Use Arena

2

 Catholic Basilica Site

3

 Ferry Road Upgrade

Community

4

 Ara


5

 Student Housing

6


 Southwark Street

Business

7

 Boxed Quarter

8

 Event and venue spaces

9

 Food hub

Summarised comments from participants

Insights gained

- “This area is very industrial, there is very little residential.”
- “Surprising number of businesses in this neighbourhood.”
- “There is a surprising community emerging with pop-up markets and the re-use of old industrial buildings for small quirky businesses.”
- “We use the area a lot but haven’t thought of it as a neighbourhood.”
- “This area is better suited for commercial businesses and short term accommodation than other parts of the neighbourhood.”
- “Interesting to hear how it changed post-earthquakes.”

Likes

- “This is a funky area with some interesting businesses.”
- “There is a potential for growth in this area”
- “Has an emerging personality.”
- “Pockets of vibrancy within the commercial area.”
- “The stadium is an opportunity to activate the surrounding area.”

Dislikes

- “Walking down Barbadoes Street feels lonely with not many other pedestrians or businesses fronting the street.”
- “No berm or barrier (could be something simple w/ lower maintenance like planter boxes & benches) between footpath and traffic.”
- “There is a risk that the stadium could create a donut (dead space when not activated).”
- “We need greenspace to divide the big blocks.”
- “I walk through the neighbourhood regularly (along Tuam, St Asaph, and Barbadoes) and had forgotten how uncomfortable it is to walk through that area at times between traffic noise, little other foot traffic and warehouse type blocks.”

How should this area change?

- “The design of the multi-use arena is crucial in activating or killing the area. If the street level floor of the arena is filled with commercial and hospitality spaces it will be alive and vibrant all year long.”
- “More greenery – trees and green space to divide blocks.”
- “Better connectivity with other parts of the city with public transport and better pedestrian routes.”
- “Homes with better design and surrounding amenity.”
- “More public schools in the Central City.”
- “Still industrial/grunge, but not in a way that feels unliveable.”

How will the information be used? Insights and experiences shared by participants on the Conversation Walk will help inform neighbourhood level planning. The walk was a great way to hear from people about the neighbourhood and build relationships. The list of strengths shows the Council what the advantages of this neighbourhood are, and the list of opportunities provides a good starting point to identify elements that could be enhanced. This information may also help shape Council webpages about Central City living.