

Towards the Revitalisation of New Brighton Mall

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Executive Summary

Within New Brighton, there is immense potential for revitalisation of the suburbs retail centre. Working with ChristchurchNZ, this project explored what opportunities could best reinvigorate economic conditions in New Brighton and provide for community needs while retaining its identity. A mixed methods approach was incorporated to investigate this project. The methods used included surveys, interviews, observational research, and data analysis. The research allowed for key themes to be identified. Key themes included sense of community, land banking, safety concerns, appearance, and fragmented business environment. Upon reviewing the key themes, our group concluded that spending leakage is driven by the variability of retail at outside shopping centres and the absence of a sense of safety. To activate the revitalisation of New Brighton, the creation of a business association, the introduction of chain stores, council interventions such as targeted rates on vacant land, business, and community encouragement. Suggestions for future research that was not touched upon within the project could include the effects of sea level rise towards the planning of New Brighton revitalising.

in Birmingham, which is a function centre that incorporated a variety of retail opportunities which in turn increased spending by catering to local and ethnic needs (Instone & Roberts, 2006). This perspective suggests that New Brighton could address its spending leakage issue by focusing on what major retail environments are not providing, such as services for local and ethnic communities.

Culture-led Regeneration

A method of regeneration that is based around strong community involvement is culture-led regeneration (CLR). As government and private entities responsible for facilitating urban development become more concerned with creating sustainable and resilient environments to serve all people, CLR has become commonplace in urban planning frameworks (McElduff et al, 2013). CLR has been identified as an approach that could increase the sustainability and longevity of development projects by facilitating more community involvement (Paiola, 2008; Chiu et al, 2019). Real world examples of culture-led regeneration typically follow three models: culture and regeneration, cultural regeneration, and culturally led regeneration. Culturally led regeneration methods often result in the most positive and long-lasting outcomes for towns. These methods are highly collaborative and follow the characteristics of 'bottom-up' regeneration practices. A study of the organisational methods used for Festivo Filosofia, a cultural event in Modena, Italy (Esposito, 2015).

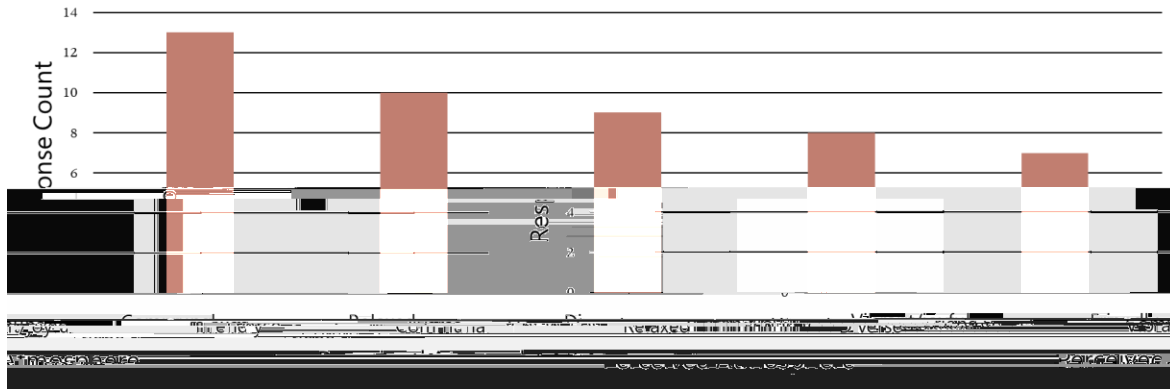


Figure 2: Responses from the market survey. Responses were prompted by the question, 'How would you describe the atmosphere of the New Brighton Seaside Market?'

Members of the community indicated that they have not been listened to since the earthquakes with the release of the master plan in 2015 that has not come to fruit on and numerous groups from the Council, Community board, academics, and civil society groups consulting on and promising improvements that did not materialise. There is a divergence in views between distinct groups within New Brighton regarding any redevelopment of the New Brighton shops. Those who answered the residents survey indicated that there was a strong desire for chain stores such as the Warehouse or Farmers whereas those who answered the Seaside market survey indicated a desire for local independent stores. While greater variety is a strong driver of spending leakage to other shopping centres such as Eastgate and the Palms, there are different preferences in the community over the most desired solution.

Land banking

An issue raised during interviews and survey responses was the presence of vacant sites and fragmented land ownership. Much of the property in New Brighton's retail centre was purchased by property developers when the area was seen as economically prosperous during the retail boom in 1980. The valuation of these land parcels has decreased significantly since the introduction of 7-day trading. Interviewees mentioned facing difficulties with current landowners who are reluctant to sell for a negative return, but also do not see the value in investing in developing their own land. The issue of vacant land became more prominent after the 2010-11 Christchurch earthquake sequence. Not only did this result in property damage in the mall, but red zoning and the loss of population around the Avon River caused a drop in consumer demand. A review of the New Brighton commercial zone by Christchurch City Council in 2017 showed that vacant floor space had increased from 1798m² to 4167m² between 2010 and 2016 (Christchurch City Council, 2017).

Without active care from owners, these plots of vacant land are left to deteriorate, and can have negative impacts on community.

Percept on of safety

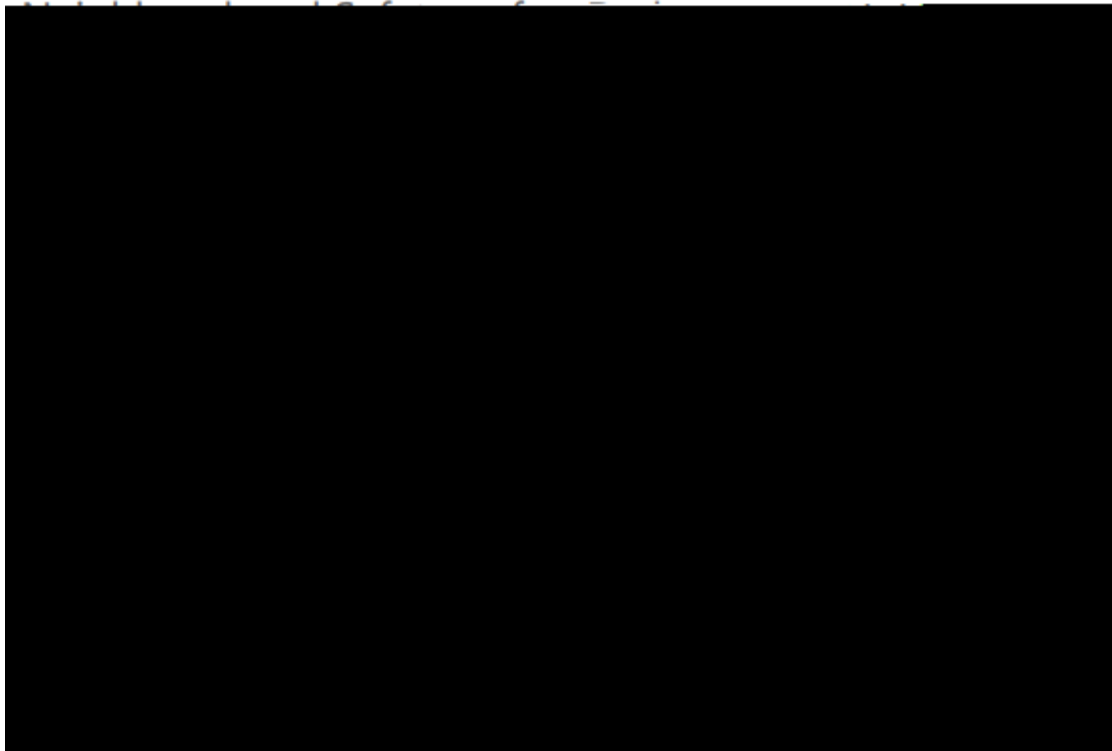


Figure 3: Data describing the safety the neighbourhood feels af er dark. Collected from the ChristchurchNZ dashboard.

Figure 3 shows the data from the ChristchurchNZ monitoring Dashboard, from this we can see that the neighbourhood believes that the area becomes more unsafe as years go by. This percept on of being unsafe could be due to the lack of light ng in the area. Other reasons indicated throughout our research was that there was a concern about aggressive people who would loiter around the mall and of en int midate both members of the public and shop workers.

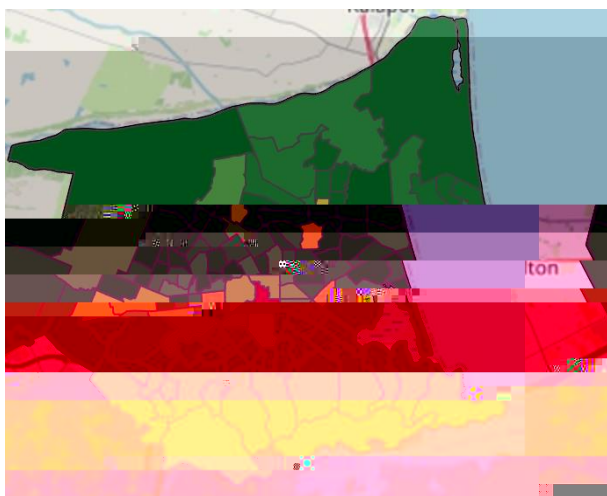


Figure 4: Annual count of reported vict misat ons in Christchurch City, September 2022-2023

The percept on of New Brighton is thought to be unsafe and risky by the greater populat on of Christchurch and some members of the New Brighton community. The figure 4 annual vict misat on counts in Christchurch between September 2022 and 2023 (New Zealand Police, 2023). New Brighton recorded a total vict misat on count of 204 during this period, lower than the suburb average. This suggests that the percept on of safety discussed in surveys and interviews is not representat ve of the true nature of the suburb.

To combat these perceptions, the Christchurch City Council is reintroducing the Guardians which is an initiative set up by the Positive Directions Trust, a local organisation that carries out projects to assist communities, and with the New Brighton Community Safety Partnership, to help combat rising crime. With the presence of these people walking about the area it is hoped that they will make the people who wish to cause problems/crimes in the area to stop and think about whether they want to do so with them around. The Guardians movement was first established in 2015 but were discontinued due to lack of funding. However, due to the Positive Directions Trust gaining funding from the Christchurch City Council, the guardians will be operating for 6 months over the summer in an initial trial period with the goal of

