

# Future of the Central Library Consultation

27 July-7 September 2020



# How to have your say

## Submissions are open from 27 July 2020 to 7 September 2020.

You can use the information in this document to give your feedback using the submission form at the end of this document. You can also make an oral submission to the Council on 22 September 2020.

If you'd like to learn or know more before giving us your feedback, you can:

- Visit our Let's Talk Wellington website [letstalk.wellington.govt.nz/central-library](http://letstalk.wellington.govt.nz/central-library)
- Subscribe for regular updates - sign up at our Let's Talk Wellington website
- Email [centrallibrarysubmission@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:centrallibrarysubmission@wcc.govt.nz)
- Come along or tune in to our Speaker Events, visit our Tiny House or attend a branch library event from mid-August
- Follow updates on [facebook.com/wellingtoncitycouncil](https://www.facebook.com/wellingtoncitycouncil)

## Decision-making process

There are three stages to making this decision, each with further opportunities to have your say.

1. We are in Stage one. The results of this consultation and engagement will help the Council to decide which option will be included in the proposed Long-term Plan.

2. Stage two is agreeing the Long-term Plan (LTP). In March and April 2021 we'll ask you to tell us how you'd prioritise this project against the others in the draft LTP. This will feed into the Council's final decision on the LTP in late June 2021.

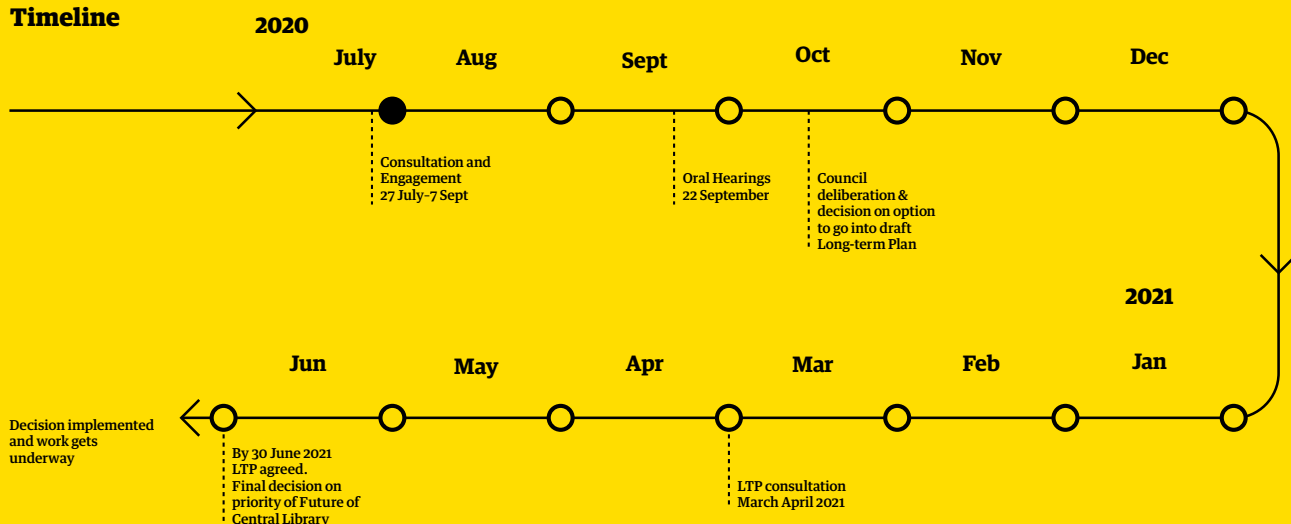
3. Stage three is when the work begins.

**So, right now, we need to hear what you think.**

## Long-term Plan

The Long-Term Plan is the key way in which we as a Council and a city make decisions about what we invest in. It brings together decisions about our services, significant projects, and assets. It is also the key process by which we consult with the community over our priorities and plans for investing in the city

## Timeline



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# Joint Introduction from the Mayor and Chief Executive

The Central Library has been our city's living room and a central part of our vibrant inner city for decades. A safe and reliable place to go, filled with ideas and possibilities to explore and learn, for more than 3000 people who visited each day.

At the moment, we don't have a functioning Central Library building. We need your help to work out what to do.

The building itself isn't safe to use for anything at the moment. There are several ways to make it safe for people to be in, which also brings new possibilities for how we can use the space.

This is an important decision, and a rare opportunity to consider both the building and the service at the same time, to set it up to continue supporting our communities now and for the next 50 years.

In this document we set out the options available and how we assessed them, based on what we know now. Our preferred option is a highly resilient strengthening of the Central Library building. This is based on a number of factors but driving this option is our duty to ensure it is safe and to reduce the risk of it closing again due to our Wellington environment, which can be wobbly to say the least. But we want to know what you think before we make a decision.

While it's tempting to only want to consider the building, we also need to take time to look at the service it delivered.

Before the building was closed due to structural concerns, there was already need to review the service offered. The building was built before wifi and the internet, Wellingtonians highly value their Central Library service and we want to make it a great place for people when it re-opens. This could include larger, more dynamic spaces to cater for children and families; individual quiet reflection, study and relaxation; and collaborative learning, meetings or social interactions. Multi-functional spaces of varying sizes would provide flexibility and different options people's activities.

Our Central Library service needs to be fit for our world today - and meet the city's growing needs in the medium and longer term. The costs are significant and we have a duty to ensure we're spending the money in a way that's sustainable for you, as today's Wellington ratepayers, and for those who will become our future ratepayers.

## **Please let us know what you think of the options.**

Your feedback will help us make a decision in October that reflects our communities' different needs. The chosen option will then be put into the draft Long-Term Plan, where you will be able to have your say again, alongside the other priorities facing our city.



# Te Kōrero Whakataki nā te Koromatua me te Tumu Whakarae

Kua noho Te Whare Pukapuka Matua hei rūma noho, hei wāhanga matua hoki o tō tātou tāone nui ngangahau mō ngā ngahuru tau e hia nei. He wāhi haumarū, he wāhi whirinaki hoki, kiki katoa ana ki ngā whakaaro me ngā āheinga hei tūhura, hei ako mā te 3000 tāngata neke atu ka toro atu i ia rā.

I tēnei wā kāore i a tātou he whare whakaruruhau mō te whare pukapuka matua. Tēnā, āwhinatia mātou ki te whiriwhiri he aha te ara hei whai mā tātou.

I tēnei wā kāore te whare i te haumarū. He āhua maha ngā ara e taea ai te whakahaumarū i te whare kia āhuru te noho a te tangata ā, mā tēnā hoki e hua mai ai he āheinga hou mō te whakamahinga o taua wāhi.

He whakataunga whakahirahira tēnei, ā, he whai wāhitanga puiaki kia whakaarohia ai te whare me te ratonga i te wā kotahi, hei tautoko i tō tātou hapori i tēnei wā ā, mō ngā tau 50 e haere ake nei.

I tēnei tuhinga kua whakatakotoria ngā kōwhiringa e wātea ana ā, i pēhea hoki tā mātou arotake i aua kōwhiringa, he arotakenga i ahu mai i tā mātou i mōhio ai. Ko tā mātou kōwhiringa pai rawa ko te whakapakari i te whare o Te Whare Pukapuka Matua kia pakari rawa. He maha ngā take e pērā ana o mātou whakaaro engari ko te take matua ko te haepapa kei runga i a mātou kia noho haumarū ā, kia heke hoki te tūpono tūraru ka katia anō te whare nā ngā āhuatanga o te taiao o Pōneke. Heoi anō, e hiahia ana mātou ki te mōhio he aha tō koutou whakaaro i mua tonu i tā mātou whakataunga.

Ahakoia ka warea kē pea ngā whakaaro kia aro noa iho ki te whare, me whai whakaaro hoki ki te ratonga i puta i taua whare.

I mua tonu i te katinga o te whare nā ngā māharahara mō tōna hanganga, i reira kē te matea kia arotakengia te ratonga. Ka matapoporetia te ratonga o Te Whare Pukapuka Matua e ngā tāngata o Pōneke ā, ko tō mātou hiahia kia noho tonu taua whare hei wāhi hira rawa ki te hapori ina tūwhera anō ai. Tēnā pea he wāhi nui ake, hihiri hoki hei wāhi mā ngā tamariki me ngā whānau; he wāhi whakaaroaro ngū, ako, whakatā; he wāhi ako ngātahi, hui, pāhekoheko ā-hapori. Mā ngā wāhi āheinga-matarau, rahinga rerekē e tuku ai ngā kōwhiringa rerekē me te āhuatanga urutau mō ngā mahi a te tangata.

Me tōtika te ratonga o tō tātou Whare Pukapuka Matua mō te ao e noho nei tātou - me te whakatutuki i ngā matea o tō tātou tāone nui mō te pae tata me te pae tawhiti. Inā te nui o te utu ā, kei a mātou te haepapa kia tika te whakapaunga moni kia toitū ai mā koutou, ngā kaiutu rēti o inamata, ngā kaiutu rēti o anamata hoki.

## **Tēnā, tukuna mai koa tō koutou whakaaro mō ngā kōwhiringa.**

Mā tō koutou whakahokinga kōrero mātou e āwhina ki te whai whakataunga ā te Whiringa-ā-nuku e hāngai ana ki ngā hiahia rerekē o te hapori. Kātahi ka whakaurua taua kōwhiringa ki te tūtohunga Mahere Pae Tawhiti e taea ai e koutou te whakaputa whakaaro anō, hei tāpiritanga ki ērā atu take kei mua i te aroaro o tō tātou tāone nui.



# Summary of proposal

## What is the Council consulting on?

Through this consultation we are seeking your feedback to help inform our decision about what we do about our Central Library. The option decided upon will be added to the draft Long-term Plan, which we will also consult you about along with other Council projects.

The big question is what do we do about our Central Library building? At the moment it has structural issues and can't be used. This document describes five different options to respond to this situation.

There are certain givens. As the city's living room, a Central Library must be warm, safe, comfortable and a place you want to spend time. It is often a life-line for those more vulnerable members of our community, including people who are socially isolated. The Library needs to be accessible so everyone can move around the building, regardless of their level of mobility. It also needs to connect with various transport options so it is easy to get to. We want the library to connect to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct as the heart of our city.

The Council is the Kaitiaki (Guardian) of the Central Library, including the wealth of knowledge and ideas intrinsically linked to our collections. We take this role seriously, particularly our responsibility to this taonga on Wellington's behalf and ensuring people can use or see them in a central, safe and resilient space.

Our preference at this stage is to choose Option C High Level Remediation. We want to return the library service to the existing Central Library building after it has been fully strengthened with the addition of a base isolation system. This option is the safest and most resilient solution for the Central Library building and its users. While it is the most expensive option, we believe it meets our obligation to be prudent with ratepayers money as it increases the existing building's life expectancy to the greatest extent and it is unlikely that additional strengthening will be required again in the next 50 years. This option delivers service continuity for the Central Library service while future proofing our ability to deliver an adaptable, modern library service and explore partnerships. It also allows us to mitigate some climate change impacts in the future.

The building's heritage will be retained, and integrate more with Te Ngākau Civic Precinct and the surrounding streets through additional entrances, views, landscaping and improved accessibility.

We've set out the factors considered and how this compares to the other options on pages 28-29. Along with our preferred option, we have provided four other options in this document to consider.

The Council is required to be prudent and to be open to alternative approaches to funding Council projects. We will explore what ideas and approaches the building sector may be able to contribute to enhancing outcomes and/or reducing the costs of the five options, whilst maintaining Council ownership of the building, through an Expression of Interest process. This will be supported by a design brief that describes the outcomes that we are looking for. This does not commit the Council to any particular course of action, but it means we can explore any potential benefits. The results of this work will be reported back to Council in October when the Council will consider the results of the consultation and engagement and decides on a final option.

# Background

Wellington's Central Library building has been an integral part of the city's landscape and civic heart for the last 30 years. Before the Central Library closed it was Wellington's second most visited public facility after Te Papa.

The Central Library was the largest of the 12 libraries in the Wellington City Libraries network and was open 65.5 hours per week. Around 3,000 people visited it every day.

The Central Library was a place where knowledge and people come together. More than just a building, our library - like others around the world - had many roles. It provided equality of access to information and knowledge; supported the development of literacy and skills; and provided a safe, warm, no-obligation place where people can spend time, particularly our most vulnerable.

## **Why was the Central Library closed?**

The Kaikōura earthquakes caused significant damage to a large number of buildings in the Wellington region with precast concrete flooring systems. The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) partnered with the engineering community to investigate the performance of these flooring systems during earthquakes.

That work and the investigation into Statistics House led to revised guidelines being issued in November 2018 for concrete buildings. Engineers were instructed to use these to assess buildings with precast concrete floors, which included the Central Library building.

The engineer's assessment of the Central Library building showed that the building's structure and in particular the floor system design presented a high level of potential failure in a significant earthquake.

On that basis, Council officers recommended that the Central Library building and public car park underneath it should be closed to the public and staff as soon as practical. The Council's Chief Executive closed the building and carpark on 19 March 2019.

## **What's happened since the Library was closed?**

The Council prioritised establishing an interim CBD library network to ensure Wellingtonians and visitors could continue to access library events, programmes, and services in the central city.

In July 2019, Council sought an independent specialist, Professor Ken Elwood, to facilitate a workshop with engineering and industry experts, to identify potential engineering solutions for the Central Library building.

As the MBIE guidelines are new, the engineering profession is coming to grips with them and our Central Library is one of the first significant buildings affected by them. The outcomes of the workshop were further developed by Council's appointed structural engineers to produce design schemes for three remediation options developed to a level suitable for costing by a quantity surveyor.

The Council paper presented on 27 May 2020 provided details of design schemes and estimated cost assessments to remediate the Central Library building to three different levels - low and medium structural strengthening and a high resilience option. In addition, the Council was advised that the Central Library's building services which were installed when the building was constructed in 1991, are close to the end of their operating life. Most of these building services will need to be removed in order to carry out any strengthening work and will then be replaced as part of the project.

## **What are 'Building services'?**

These are the systems, plant and equipment that make a building functional such as

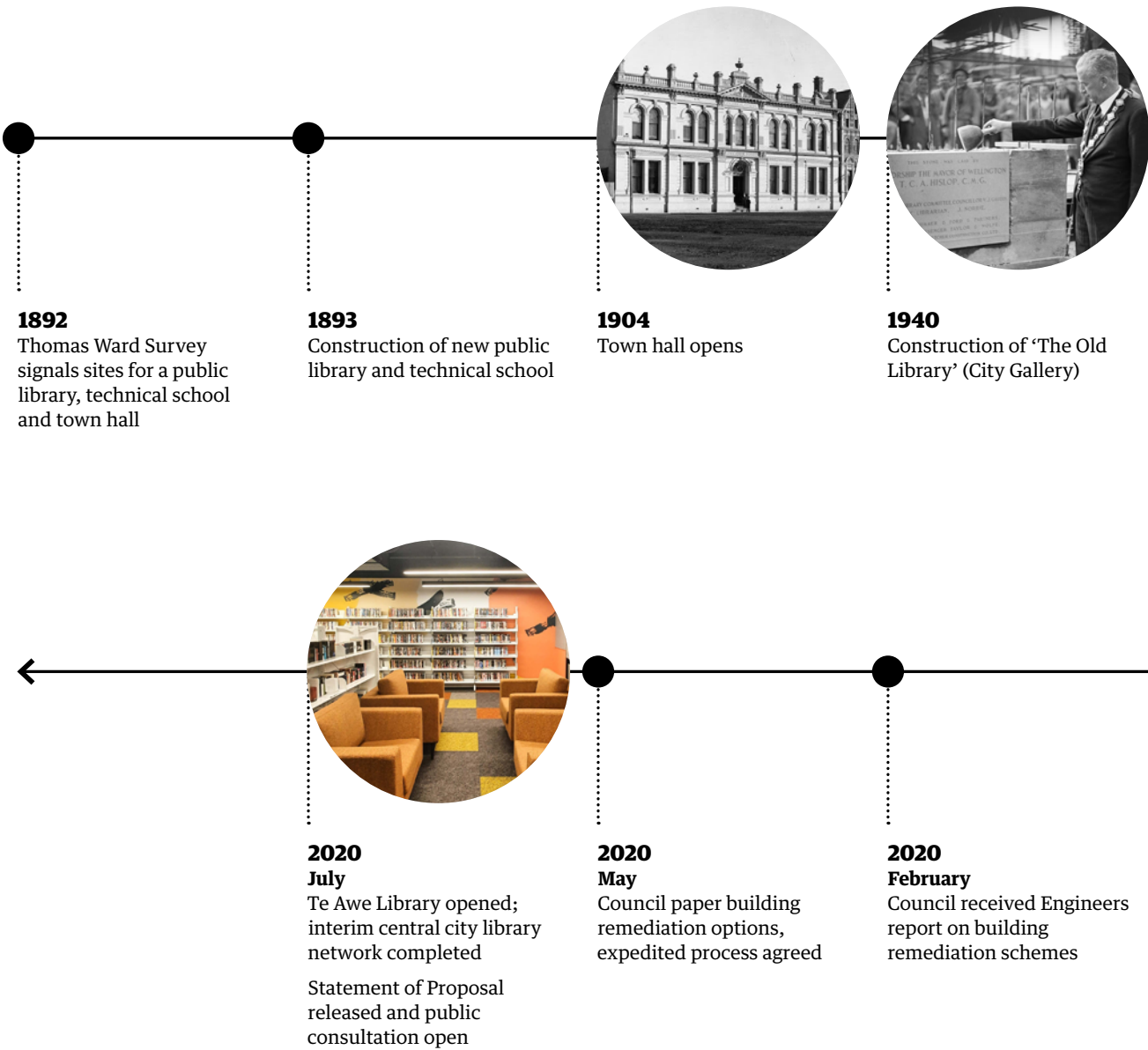
- Heating and cooling
- Plumbing and water systems
- Fire detection and protection
- Power and lighting

## **Special Consultative Procedure**

On 3 June 2020 the Council requested officers prepare a Statement of Proposal (SOP) for Council to adopt that would be followed by public consultation using the Special Consultative Procedure in section 83 of the Local Government Act. To comply with the Local Government Act the SOP must outline the practicable options to respond to the current state of the Central Library service.

A full timeline of all the steps taken by the Council since the closure of the Central Library Building is available on the Wellington City Libraries website: [wcl.govt.nz/centralupdates/Central-Library-Project-Timeline.pdf](http://wcl.govt.nz/centralupdates/Central-Library-Project-Timeline.pdf)

# The Central Library and Te Ngākau Civic Precinct





**1950**

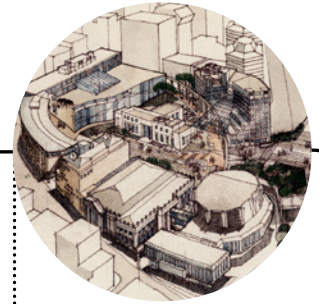
Construction of the Municipal Office Building and civic lawn

**1974**

Robert Kennedy's 1974 plan for the development of a fully pedestrianised civic centre

**1983**

Michael Fowler Centre opens. Closure of northern end of Cuba Street



**1989-91**

Athfield, Moller and Tebbs' Civic Centre development: closure of Mercer Street, opening of the Central Library and construction of the Civic Administration Building on the civic lawn



**2019**

**March**

Engineers assessment of Central Library building completed

Wellington City Council closed the building and carpark to the public

**May**

Arapaki Manners Library and Service Centre opened

**September**

Council hosted a technical workshop with engineering industry to discuss potential solutions for the building

**October**

He Matapihi Molesworth Library opened

**2018**

**June**

Investigation into Statistics House completed

**November**

MBIE issued revised guidelines for buildings with concrete floors

**2016**

Kaikoura earthquakes  
Closure of the Civic Administration Building

**2013**

Closure of Town Hall and Capital E



# The role of modern libraries in cities

The roles of modern libraries nationally and internationally are evolving. What libraries deliver, what people need, and the way they learn, has evolved beyond what was planned for in the late 1980s and early 90s when there was no internet, Wi-Fi or digital devices. What we offer needs to adapt too.

Libraries play a fundamental role in a community's resilience as they form part of the physical and social infrastructure that supports a city to respond to, and recover from, significant or difficult events. They are accessible - easy to get into, around and out of. They're a social equalizer as they allow equal access to information. They're easier to use with longer opening hours, central locations and good transport connections.

Around the world public libraries are being reimagined to provide different types of spaces which cater to a wider range of people, for example:

**'Living Rooms'** are for collections relaxation, recreational reading, study, learning and knowledge exploration. People can:

- Access most library collections and resources, including special facilities for rare books and unique collections, and local history resources.
- Use moveable seating and furniture for quiet reading and study.
- Use devices for reading online magazines and newspapers.



Johnsonville Library in Waitohi  
Photograph: Matt Paterson



Color Table Playtime by Lester Public Library /  
CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 <https://flic.kr/p/2hhKkAh>

**Discovery and Innovation spaces** focus on literacy, learning and creativity. They include:

- Workshops, classroom and meeting spaces that support a range of library-led, community-led, and partnership activities and programmes.
- Fun spaces for early literacy development through reading, play, music and stories.
- Youth hang-out and gaming areas, meet up spaces for tutoring or studying with friends, and screens and whiteboards in collaborative study zones.
- Digital learning classes or individual technology support.
- Maker and creation spaces for 3D printing, recording, sewing and much more.

**Engagement and Showcase spaces** are where people connect with big ideas, topical issues and civic functions via:

- Areas for public meetings and civic functions
- Highlighted library collections and resources
- Exhibitions, displays and performances
- Venues to host local and national events and performances for festivals, creative, cultural and local works, groups and organisations.



Oodi, Central Library, Helsinki, Finland by Ninara / CC BY 2.0 <https://flic.kr/p/2aPuDhm>

**Arrive and Navigate spaces** welcome and invite people into the library and the different areas by providing:

- Clear transitions from one area to another through consistent, intuitive signage.
- Wayfinding routes provide space to circulate to, from, and between zones and the different services.
- Simple and clear signage to help people find what they want, supported with staff available on the floor to help when needed
- Digital tools to provide real-time information about programming and activities.

**Refresh and Revive spaces** for people to take a break, eat, rest, and relax. They provide:

- A variety of atmospheres, seating and lounge spaces, places to meet up with friends, colleagues or whānau, pick up some food and coffee, or hang out and wait.
- Bathroom facilities, public storage lockers, water fountains, a range of general benches and seating.
- Café and seating which link indoor and outdoor spaces.

# What could Wellington's future Central Library service look like?

The Central Library is highly valued for its role in our city's social, physical and civic heart. However there were some aspects that needed to be improved. We know this from our own research and feedback from library customer surveys. While we need to re-establish a Central Library, we also have the responsibility of ensuring this new service will meet the changing needs of Wellington's future generations.

By 2043 the inner city population is expected to double and an increasing number of central city residents will be under the age of 34. With this growing CBD population our library may need a greater emphasis on communal spaces, a more curated, heavily used collection, creative and makerspaces, plus a focus on lending non-traditional items and on seamless digital infrastructure and content.

The vision for Wellington's libraries is to be "open for creativity, connection and innovation". What could that mean for you?

## **Books and more**

Providing access to books and other physical and digital collections will continue to be a core service. However our library could also be where people access new technologies, spaces and services which support life-long learning, connection and community.

## **Future-proofing**

Libraries act as anchors to community hubs where shared spaces and aligned programming provide the public with a broad range of creative, cultural, social or civic learning opportunities, events and activities. This strategic approach to partnering can benefit people and the city. The new Johnsonville Library at Waitohi is a strong example of this on a smaller scale. It provides a fresh, modern and future-proofed library service to meet peoples' current and future needs.

## **Interim CBD libraries**

With the closure of the Central Library, the Council moved quickly to design and set up a network of three interim CBD libraries until the Central Library could reopen. The Library closure was a huge change for the public, our customers and staff, and it also created opportunities to be innovative and test emerging ideas around the purpose of modern libraries, while we retained core services, including access to physical collections.

Arapaki Manners Library and Service Centre opened in May 2019, followed by He Matapihi Molesworth Library (in the National Library) in October 2019. The third and largest site, Te Awe Library, opened on 14 July 2020. These three branches combined house more than 60,000 items.

The Council has also secured a home for the Central Library's collection of 370,000 items in Johnsonville. Te Pātaka, the new 2000 sqm Collection and Distribution Centre was designed to provide a safe, secure facility for the full collection. Customers are able to order items from the collection to be delivered to the library branch of their choice.

The options presented in this document all restore the Central Library to its previous size so the interim branches will be closed once the replacement Central Library Service has been restored. We would like to hear what you think of the interim branches and what features you would like to see in the future Central Library Service. We'll also explore the role the new Collection and Distribution Centre in Johnsonville will play in the future.

### Principles guiding how the library looks inside and works

The principles guiding the design of the future Central Library service and spaces under any of the options are to:

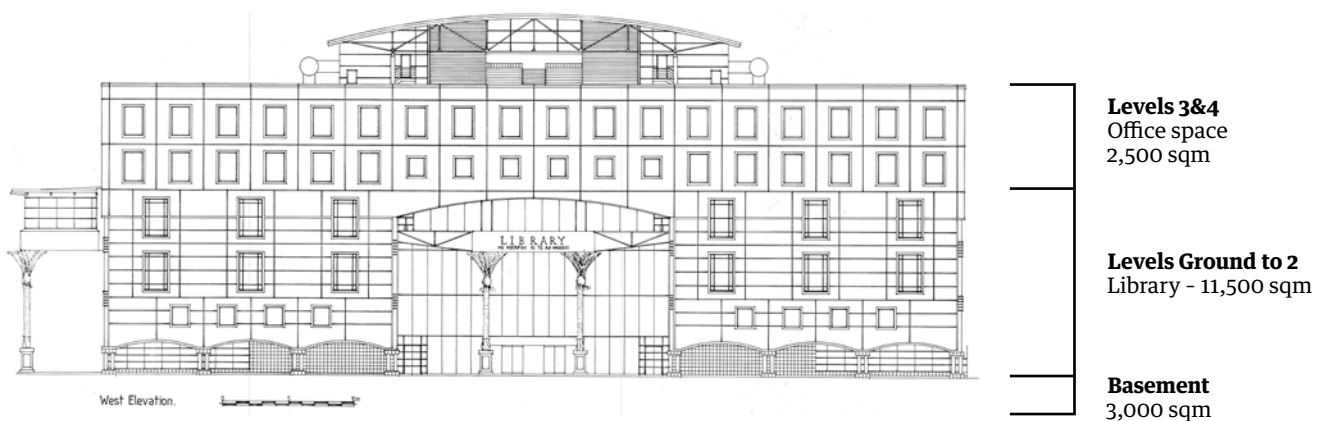
- restore a Central Library service to the community that reflects peoples changing needs
  - remove barriers to access through services, programmes and facilities that are equitable and inclusive to all
  - provide inviting, engaging, and comfortable facilities with embedded flexibility through innovative design
  - balance space for relaxation, recreational reading, study, learning, and knowledge exploration, with space for collections
- embed fit-for-purpose technological solutions and equipment to reflect Wellington as a ‘smart city’
  - consider how the library service could co-locate with Council’s front-facing customer services and other partners whose mission, purpose and values are aligned, complementary and mutually beneficial
  - more appropriately celebrate and showcase our taonga and special collections and honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the foundation of our nationhood and community.

**We want your views on what you would like to see in the Central Library service.**

## What is the size of the library and building?

The Central Library building isn’t solely a library. The top two floors were used for Council office space immediately before closing. In earlier years these had been commercial office space. There’s a basement below which connects into the currently closed carpark underneath Civic Precinct.

Overall the internal building area is 17,000 square metres (sqm) and the library space is 11,500 sqm. All options presented in this Statement of Proposal are based on a building of the same size as the current Central Library building with the same amount of space allocated to library service functions/activity.



# Factors used to assess options



## Building and structural elements

### Does the option make the building safe?

In the first instance, any strengthening solution needs to address the life safety performance of a building. The Building Act 2004 determines that a building's life safety level is measured by the New Building Standard (NBS) seismic rating system. The NBS system rates how a building will perform in earthquake as a percentage of what is expected from a new building (that has been built to meet or exceed the current standards required under the Building Act). Currently the Central Library building's floor system design presents a high level of potential failure in a significant earthquake. The identification of this potential floor failure means the building would only achieve an effective NBS of 15-20%.

### Does the option make the building resilient?

In addition to achieving an acceptable level of life safety there are different levels of building resilience the different strengthening schemes can achieve. These levels have different outcomes for the:

- cost of the project
- likelihood that the building, and library service, will be able to be used immediately after an earthquake (service continuity)
- cost of repairs after any earthquakes
- additional strengthening required if building regulations change (requiring the building to close for this work to be done)
- building's life expectancy

### What is 'NBS'?

The life safety of a building is measured by the New Building Standard (NBS), which rates how a building would perform in an earthquake measured against a new building

### How would the option respect heritage?

The Library building was completed in 1991 to a design by Athfield Architects as part of the redevelopment of the Civic Centre through the 1980s and '90s. It is a substantial Post-modern building that has won both local and national architectural awards and has been described as one of "Wellington's signature and even iconic buildings".\*

As the building is currently not listed in the Council's District Plan there is no regulatory impediment to demolition. However, the building is part of the District Plan Civic Centre Heritage Area and therefore any replacement building, or changes to the exterior of the existing building, would need to be sympathetic to the Heritage Values of the Civic Centre.

The building is being considered by Heritage New Zealand for inclusion on the New Zealand Heritage List Rārangi Kōrero. If this eventuates the Council would be required to take account of this in its review of the District Plans Heritage List. Heritage New Zealand would have the opportunity for input into any resource consent application relating to the building.

### Does the option ensure it is accessible to all ages and connected to transport options?

Our Central Library must be accessible for residents and visitors of any age and ability so everyone can use it and it must be easy to get to and be connected to transport options.

### What do we mean by 'resilience'?

A resilient building is less likely to suffer damage in an earthquake and this means the building is more likely to reopen quickly without the need for significant repairs.

\*Judi Keith Brown, "Save it or Scrap it", public presentation, New Zealand Institute of Architects 2019.



### Service elements

#### Does this option future-proof the library service?

What is provided needs to be flexible enough to meet changes in the future, so that over the years the library remains a great space and service to use. This will reduce the likelihood of needing to spend significant amounts of money on it again in the next 30-50 years. Providing access to books and other physical and digital collections will continue to be a core service. However our library could also be a place where people can access new technologies, use different physical spaces to support learning and interaction, and use services which support life-long learning, connection and community.

#### Does the option have opportunities for partnership?

There's the potential to consider partnering with other organisations community service providers and commercial sector. This might include a joint initiative with Capital E, who has a strong desire to return to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct. There is scope in the options presented to explore the feasibility of a presence in a Central Library building. There are clear synergies between the purpose and offerings for both the Library and Capital E. There is also potential to use spaces for community and educational programming, civic participation, Council staff and services. Commercial partnerships could range from making sure great food and coffee is available at a café again, to leasing the non-library office space.



### City and Te Ngākau Civic Precinct context

#### Does the option contribute to a resilient, lively and distinct Te Ngākau Civic Precinct?

All options keep a library service in Te Ngākau Civic Precinct. The Library had 3000 people visit per day. As a destination or a place to pass through it contributed to the vibrancy and energy of the city.

The Precinct has a number of projects in progress and others have yet to be considered. We are currently strengthening the Town Hall and the Council is working together with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and Victoria University of Wellington | Te Herenga Waka to develop the National Music Centre in the Precinct.

A framework to guide the future development of the Precinct will ensure all of the places within have stronger connections with the rest of the Precinct and surrounding streets.

Any decision on the future Library should make the most of the options to open up and connect (activate) people with the Central Library building, as well as its surrounding areas and the CBD.



### Environment

#### Will the risks of climate change be addressed by this option?

Currently the library and carpark are vulnerable to the effects of climate change such as sea level rise (being near the coast) and flooding (more frequent extreme weather events and being in one of the lowest points of the city).

#### How can the building's sustainability be improved by this option?

A strengthened existing building will most likely have a lower carbon footprint than a complete new build. This is because the "carbon cost" of demolition and disposal of existing materials, as well as the carbon footprint of new building materials has an expected total carbon footprint higher than that of strengthening which requires new materials and produces less non-recyclable rubbish. With all options we will endeavor to recycle and reuse as much material as possible.

The strengthening options include varying levels of upgrade/changes to the existing building which will in turn deliver varying levels of improved energy efficiency through thermal performance and/or sun control. The performance of a new build would be superior to the existing building.

Replacing building services will be included as part of any option. The new services will be equivalent in their performance as to what a new building would include. This means a remediated building will deliver similar energy efficiencies as a new building.



## Cost and timeframe

### What is the cost to ratepayers?

The Council has a duty to provide prudent stewardship of resources in the current and future interests of the city. Restoring a Central Library building is costly (regardless of option) and this will be funded by Council borrowings. This will increase the rates paid by Wellingtonians and is shown as an average increase residential rates.

There are two ways of showing the cost to ratepayers:

- **Capital cost of the project**

Construction project costs continue to be developed and refined through each of the stages of a project. As a project design matures, the level of assumption and contingency reduces. At the early stage of a project, cost estimates are based on concept designs only, so they contain a lot of assumptions and a very high level of contingency.

The costs provided for all options are expressed as a range which reflects the variations that may occur as the project is developed. Costs include building services, fit out, and structure. The costs do not include allowance for any subsequent strengthening or repairs relating to changes in Building Code, engineering standards or earthquake damage.

For the three remediation options project costs have been estimated by the Council's consulting quantity surveyors based on high level concepts prepared by the Council's consulting engineers. These options include the costs of replacing the end of life/non-compliant building services and the fit out of the repaired building. In the case of the two new building options there is no concept design. Accordingly the costs provided are based on industry square metre rates for a reasonable quality building.

- **Increase for Residential Ratepayers**

For residential ratepayers all the options increase the rates they will pay every year. This assumes the project is added to the Council's projects in the draft LTP and there is no corresponding reduction in other projects. The differences in the increases in rates are due to the different capital cost (and resulting interest and depreciation) and buildings' life expectancies. The amount is expressed as a range which aligns to the range of capital costs for each option. The increase is averaged over the life of the project and is based on the Capital Value (CV) of an average Wellington house. Once an option is chosen in October, we will be able to provide more detailed financial analysis for the draft LTP.

### What is the indicative timeframe?

Indicative opening dates have been included for each option put forward. These dates are based on assessments of the time required for the various project stages. All the options have four project stages: Design, Consenting, Procurement and Construction. The two new building options have additional stages. Option D - New Build on Same Site has "resolution of heritage issues and demolition" which may take up to 21 months to proactively resolve and Option E - New Build on Another Te Ngākau Civic Precinct site has a stage to "identify and confirm a site" which may take up to 18 months to resolve. The extra time spent on these stages is partially offset by a shorter construction stage.

The interim CBD library network will remain until a replacement Central Library service opens, at which point it will close.

# Options not proceeded with

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The Council is required to explore all options and put forward those that are practicable. To be practicable an option was assessed against the factors listed above, and needed enough detail (for example costs, features) to be able to be quantified or described to a level that allows for informed decision-making. Some options were determined to not be practicable and were not put forward.

Examples included:

- **Minimal level repairs followed by a future upgrade**  
This could be a combination of the remediation options, for example, Option A Low-level Remediation followed by either Option B Mid-level or Option C High-level remediation. It could have several variations depending on when the later work is done. This made the option too uncertain to include. In addition any version of this option is likely to result in another lengthy closure of the Central Library and a further interim service would need to be established and paid for to cover that period.
- **Replace with a localised model of smaller branches in CBD** - This is also known as a devolved model. We discounted this option for a number of reasons including:
  - The current interim network wouldn't support Wellington's predicted population growth
  - We have had a Central Library in Te Ngākau Civic Precinct since the early 1900s and it has always played a key role in bringing people into the area and wider CBD
  - We would still need to consult about how the building can be used in the future
- **Relocate the Central Library to the Convention and Exhibition Centre** - The Convention and Exhibition Centre project is too far down the track to stop and reconsider without introducing uncertainty, significant costs and delays, including:
  - There are contracts in place and construction has started
  - The full costs would move to impact residential ratepayers (costs are currently to be mostly covered by commercial ratepayers)
- It isn't as accessible to public transport, shelter or parking, as a Te Ngākau Civic Precinct location
- It does not contribute to the activation of Te Ngākau Civic Precinct.
- **Relocate the Central Library to a non Te Ngākau Civic Precinct site**  
Despite the potential benefit of this option to better address the impact of climate change, it was discounted as there were too many unknowns to adequately describe and evaluate it. For example, the potential sites need to be known to be costed, and by not knowing the site and its condition it makes it difficult to assess key factors such as timeframes, costs or accessibility to transport.

**If any of these are your preferred option or if you have an option that isn't included anywhere, there is space on the submission form for you to tell us that and to tell us why.**

# Options put forward

## Option A - Low-level remediation

Under this option the structural issues of highest concern are addressed so the building is safe to re-open. The building is likely to be damaged and need repair after a significant earthquake. The construction work would remove much of the internal fit-out and this would need to be replaced resulting in the building interior being refreshed. The Central Library would look largely the same as it did before it closed.

### Key elements of this option are:

#### **Structural remediation:**

- Addresses immediate life safety issues: achieves approximately 40% NBS
- Achieves low level of building resilience
- Installs additional supports for floors and central stairs
- Improves fixings which support the external panels that clad the building
- Minor strengthening of the building frame.

#### **Minor interior refresh:**

- New internal walls, ceilings and floor coverings
- Improved layout, upgraded fixtures and fittings.

### At a glance

<b>Cost</b>	\$76.3m-\$90.8m
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<b>Increase for Average Residential Ratepayer each of 35 years of building life</b>	\$38.70-\$46.30 pa
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<b>Indicative opening date</b>	November 2023
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### Advantages

- Building is retained and immediate life safety issues addressed
- Library service restored within shortest timeframe
- Lowest cost of all the options
- Some sustainability improvements due to upgraded building services
- Some minor improvements to library service

### Disadvantages

- 40% NBS rating (approximately)
- Low level of building resilience
- High likelihood of building being closed again (and a new interim library service needed) due to either substantial (and potentially unrepairable) damage following a significant earthquake or more strengthening work due to significant risk the building would be classified earthquake prone if building regulations are revised in the future. Risk of unbudgeted costs.
- No or limited improvement to accessibility and connection to the wider Te Ngākau Civic Precinct
- Lack of resilience puts heritage at risk of loss
- No mitigation for climate change risks
- Minimal opportunities for partnerships



*Te Ngākau Civic Precinct reflected in the Central Library windows*

## Option B – Mid-level remediation

Under this option the building would be strengthened to approximately 80% NBS. It addresses the structural issues of highest concern and increases the building’s ability to withstand a significant earthquake. It would increase the likelihood the building could be re-occupied safely after an earthquake; however, the building is likely to still sustain damage during a significant earthquake. More intrusive construction work is needed so more of the current fit-out would need to be removed and replaced, resulting in a higher level of interior refresh, which in turn provides an opportunity for some library service enhancements. It includes the possibility for improved accessibility and connections to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct and Harris Street.

### Key elements of this option are:

#### **Structural remediation:**

- Addresses immediate life safety issues: achieves approximately 80% NBS
- Achieves mid-level of building resilience
- **In addition to the low-level remediation elements** this option also stiffens the walls and adds bracing to cushion the impact of an earthquake

#### **Significant interior refresh:**

- **In addition to the minor interior refresh** in low-level remediation, this option would also provide the opportunity to improve the accessibility to the building

### At a glance

<b>Cost</b>	\$131.2m - \$151.8m
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<b>Increase for Average Residential Ratepayer each of 42 years of building life</b>	\$57.30-\$67.60 pa
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<b>Indicative opening date</b>	September 2024
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Early Concept image - Glazed North Façade, terraced flooring, and integration with streetscape.  
Image: Athfield Architects Limited

### Advantages

- Building is retained and immediate life safety issues are addressed
- Higher NBS rating of approximately 80%
- Likelihood of future building closures following an earthquake is reduced
- Possibility for improved accessibility and connections to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct
- Potential for some library service improvements and for some opportunities for partnerships
- Some improvement to sustainability due to upgraded building services and nominal increase in buildings life expectancy.

### Disadvantages

- Building still has a reasonable likelihood of being damaged and closed in a significant earthquake, disrupting service (risking heritage features and unbudgeted costs).
- Relatively high cost to achieve only moderate level of building resilience
- Risk of heritage loss in significant earthquake
- Takes longer to re-open library than low-level remediation option
- Some risk of closure due to more strengthening requirements from future changes in building regulations.
- No climate change mitigation

## Option C - High-level remediation (preferred option)

This option is preferred as it delivers the safest and most resilient solution for the Central Library building. This means that further closures due to earthquake damage or additional strengthening won't be required. Although the initial strengthening work is expensive it removes future costs arising due to earthquake damage or strengthening requirements (if building regulations change). It also increases the building's life expectancy more than the other remediation options. This option delivers service continuity for the Central Library service, future proofs our ability to deliver an adaptable modern library service and explore partnerships. It also allows us to mitigate some climate change impacts in the future. The building's heritage will be retained, and it will integrate more with Te Ngākau Civic Precinct and the surrounding streets through additional entrances, views, landscaping and improved accessibility.

Under this option the building's structural issues would be mitigated to the highest extent possible. It includes work from the low and mid-range remediation options, plus it base isolates the building. Base isolation would mean the building would likely be safe to occupy during and after a significant earthquake, meaning it is most likely to be open afterwards. This option involves the most intrusive construction work and therefore creates the opportunity to fully upgrade the building and immediate surrounds, including connections to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct and Harris Street, and modernise how it works as a library, community and public space for the long term.

### Key elements of this option are:

#### **Structural remediation:**

- Address immediate life safety issues: achieves an NBS in excess of 100%
- Achieves high level of building resilience
- **In addition to the low and mid-level remediation elements**, installs a base isolation system

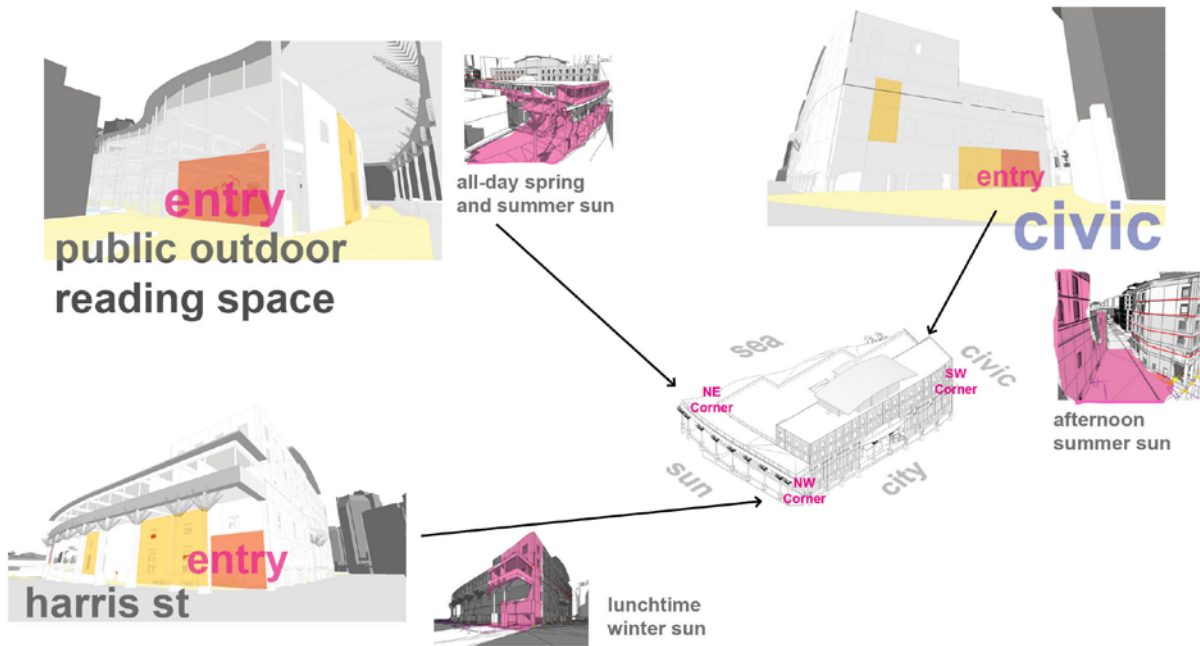
#### **Significant refresh and remodel:**

**In addition to the minor and significant interior refresh**, it creates the potential for -

- major layout reconfiguration of collections, facilities and activity spaces
- opportunity to deliver new and enhanced services
- new shared spaces for community and civic activities
- stronger connections to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct and the surrounding areas.
- Improved accessibility



Early Concept Image - Harris Street as an active edge to the Library.  
Image: Athfield Architects Limited



Building features study - Important edges and corners that create Precinct connections and operational improvements.  
Image: Athfield Architects Limited

**At a glance**

<b>Cost</b>	\$174.4m - \$199.8m
<b>Increase for Average Residential Ratepayer each of 50 years of building life</b>	\$74.30-\$86.20pa
<b>Indicative opening date</b>	May 2025



Early Concept Image - Floor plan reorganised to engage more directly with Civic Square. Image: Athfield Architects Limited

**Advantages**

- Building is retained
- Achieves highest level of life safety with an NBS rating in excess of 100%
- High level of building resilience with minimal risk of future building closures from earthquakes or changes to building regulations
- Most likely to preserve the building’s heritage elements
- Opportunity to fully modernise the library service spaces and facilities
- Building remodel would provide significant improved accessibility, activation and connection to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct
- Best ability to mitigate the effects of sea level rise for existing library building
- Significant opportunities for partnerships
- Improved sustainability outcomes due to upgraded building services, increased life expectancy of the building and elements in the fit out

**Disadvantages**

- Highest cost of remediation options
- Longest timeframe of remediation options to re-open the Central library building
- Base isolation requires use of some basement space

## Option D - New build on same site

This option would involve demolishing the existing building to put a new one on the same site. The new building would be designed to the highest level of seismic safety and resilience ensuring peoples safety and full service continuity after an earthquake. A new build provides the greatest opportunity to design the space as a library and community space for the long term.

### Key elements of this option are:

- High level of seismic safety and resilience
- Designed to incorporate best practice sustainability and accessibility standards and respond to long-term climate change concerns
- Opportunity to create different connections to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct and surrounding areas
- Opportunity to reimagine and design a multi-purpose Central Library and civic and community facility for current and future users.



Young adults collection at Johnsonville Library in Waitohi  
Photograph: Matt Paterson

### At a glance

**Cost** \$156.5m - \$160.7m

**Increase for Average Residential Ratepayer each of 64 years of building life** \$50.60-\$52.60pa

**Indicative opening date** November 2025

### Advantages

- High resilience means minimal risk of future building closures.
- Opportunity to fully optimise the design to meet future library service requirements.
- Could be built to high sustainability standards
- Lower cost than high-level remediation option
- Designed to address and mitigate future climate change impacts
- Opportunity to align with best practice accessibility standards
- Significant opportunities for partnerships
- New and enhanced connections to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct

### Disadvantages

- Does not retain the existing building and would need to resolve the heritage status of precinct in the future building and the potential future heritage scheduling by Heritage New Zealand (may also impact on timeframe)
- Negative impact on sustainability objectives due to demolition
- New build options have the longest timeframes to the library re-opening



*Photography exhibition by John B Turner, at Johnsonville Library in Waitohi  
Photograph: Matt Paterson*

# Option E – New build on another Te Ngākau Civic Precinct site

This option would involve building a new library on a different site in Te Ngākau Civic Precinct. There could be a number of possible sites which would be explored after the public consultation stage. The building would be designed to a high level of seismic resilience ensuring people’s safety and full service continuity after an earthquake. Like Option D, the new build provides the greatest opportunity to design the space as a library and community facility for the long term. The future of the existing building would need to be resolved, potentially through sale or lease, however the Council would retain ownership of the land. Protection of the heritage elements would also need to be ensured.

**Key elements of this option are:**

- High level of seismic safety and resilience
- Designed to incorporate best practice sustainability and accessibility standards and respond to long-term climate change concerns
- Opportunity to create different connections to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct and surrounding areas
- Opportunity to reimagine and design a multi-purpose Central Library and civic and community facility for current and future users.

**At a glance**

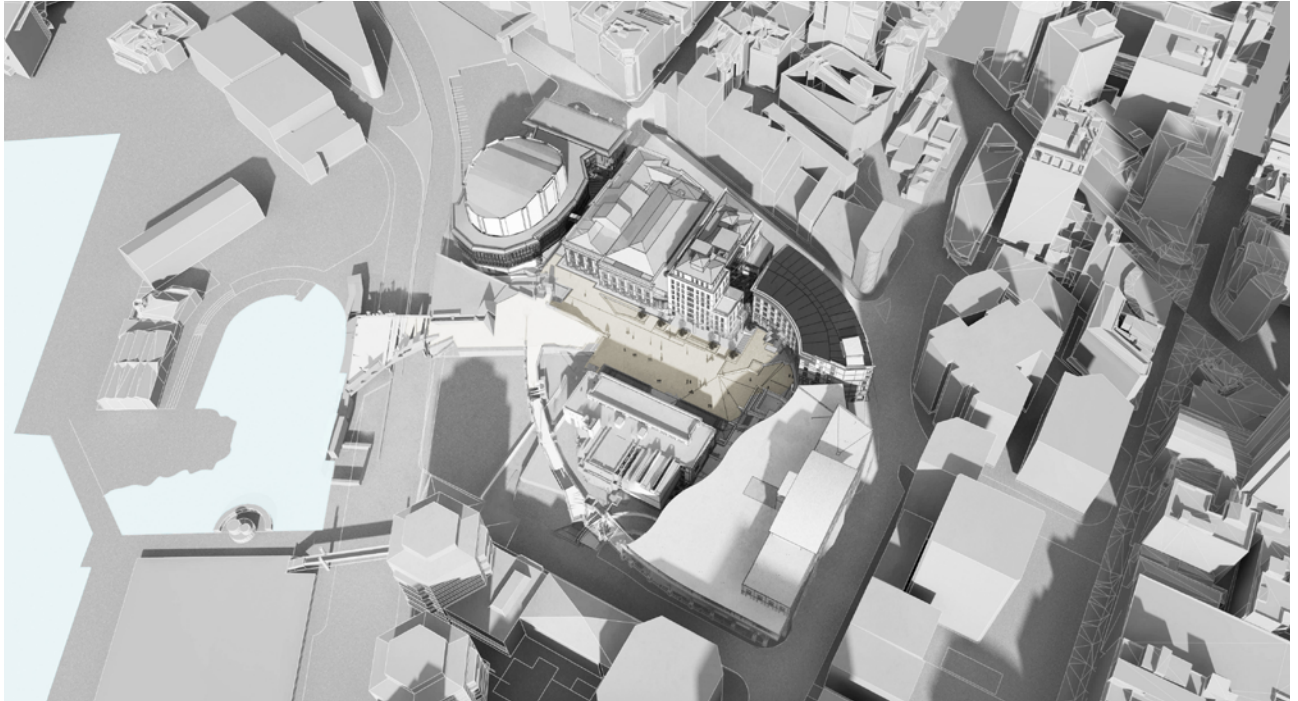
<b>Cost</b>	\$156.5m - \$160.7m
<b>Increase for Average Residential Ratepayer each of 64 years of building life</b>	\$50.60- \$52.60pa
<b>Indicative opening date</b>	November 2025



Tūranga by Christchurch City Libraries / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 <https://flic.kr/p/27zhQ2e>



Poets in Tūranga on National Poetry Day by Christchurch City Libraries / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 <https://flic.kr/p/2h5X6Uh>



*Aerial view of Te Ngākau Civic Precinct*

#### **Advantages**

- High level of seismic safety and resilience means minimal risk of future building closures.
- Opportunity to fully optimise the design to meet future library service requirements.
- Could be built to high sustainability standards.
- Lower cost than high-level remediation option and potential for revenue from sale/lease of existing building
- Existing building retained alleviating heritage and sustainability concerns that would result from demolition
- Designed to address and mitigate future climate change impacts
- Opportunity to align with best practice accessibility standards
- Significant opportunities for partnerships
- New and enhanced connections to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct

#### **Disadvantages**

- A site has to be identified and decision-making process completed with potential to add delays to overall timeframe
- The future of the existing building will need to be resolved through a separate process
- New build options have the longest timeframes to the library re-opening

# Comparing the options against the factors we considered

	Option A - Low Level Remediation	Option B - Mid Level Remediation
<b>Would the option...</b>		
<b>Make the building safe?</b>	Addresses immediate life safety issues (40% NBS)	Addresses immediate life safety issues (80% NBS)
<b>Deliver a resilient building?</b>	Low level of resilience. Likely to be damaged and need repair after a significant earthquake. Changes in future building regulations may require additional strengthening work.	Moderate level of resilience. Reduces but doesn't remove likelihood of future building closures after a significant earthquake. Risk of changes in future building regulations may require additional strengthening work.
<b>Respect Heritage?</b>	Current building retained but at risk due to likelihood of further earthquake damage	Current building retained, some risk of loss of heritage due to likelihood of further earthquake damage
<b>Be Accessible?</b>	No or limited improvement	Potential for improvement
<b>Future-proof the library service?</b>	Minor improvements but at risk of further closures	Some improvement
<b>Provide for partnerships?</b>	Minimal opportunities	Potential opportunities
<b>Make a contribution Te Ngākau - Civic Precinct</b>	No or limited changes to connection and activation	Additional connection and activation
<b>Respond to Climate Change?</b>	No mitigation	No mitigation
<b>Improve Sustainability?</b>	Some improvements due to upgraded building services.	Some improvements due to upgraded building services and nominal increase in building's life expectancy.
<b>What is...</b>		
<b>The cost to rate payers</b>		
Overall	\$76.3m-\$90.8m	\$131.2m-\$151.8m
Average annual \$ increase for residential ratepayers	\$38.90-\$46.30	\$57.30-\$67.60
<b>The timeframe</b>	Indicative opening date Nov 2023	Indicative opening date Sept 2024

Option C - High Level Remediation (preferred option)	Option D - New Build on same site	Option E - New Build on another Te Ngākau Civic Precinct site
Addresses immediate life safety issues and a high level of seismic safety (100%+ NBS)	Design to a high level of seismic safety	Design to a high level of seismic safety
High level of building resilience with minimal risk of future building closures after a significant earthquake	Design to high level of seismic resilience with minimal risk of future building closures after a significant earthquake	Design to high level of seismic resilience with minimal risk of future building closures after a significant earthquake
Current building retained and risk of loss of heritage from future earthquakes minimal	Demolition would not protect heritage	Current building retained and heritage can be protected (future use of building unknown)
Potential for significant improvement	Opportunity to align with best practice standards	Opportunity to align with best practice standards
Significant improvement and opportunity to modernise library services, spaces and facilities	Significant improvement and opportunity to meet future library service requirements	Significant improvement and opportunity to meet future library service requirements
Significant opportunities	Significant opportunities	Significant opportunities
Additional and enhanced connection and activation	New and enhanced connection and activation	New and enhanced connection and activation
Base isolation provides opportunity to respond to future impacts	Designed to address and mitigate future impacts	Designed to address and mitigate future impacts
Some improvements due to upgraded building services; significant increase in building's life expectancy; and opportunity to introduce sustainable elements in construction and fit out.	Probable negative impact due to demolition. Positive impact through incorporating latest sustainable design and construction practices in new building.	Positive impact through incorporating latest sustainable design and construction practices.
\$174.4m-\$199.8m	\$156.5m-160.7m	\$156.5m-160.7m
\$74.30-\$86.20	\$50.60-\$52.60	\$50.60-\$52.60
Indicative opening date May 2025	Highly indicative opening date Nov 2025	Highly indicative opening date Nov 2025

# FAQs

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- **Will all the books go back in?**

We expect to return a large proportion of the collection to our future Central Library. We will also consider how the new Collection and Distribution Centre may house low use or multiple items. While they are an important part of the wider Wellington City Libraries' collection they may not need to be as accessible from a Central Library. This would also provide more spaces in the future Central Library including housing and displaying rare and special collections in more suitable and engaging ways.

- **What's the plan for the rest of Te Ngākau Civic Precinct?**

We are currently committed to a number of projects, such as strengthening the Town Hall and the National Music Centre. We are also setting up a planning process to create a masterplan or framework for the wider Precinct. This will ensure any future enhancements or projects deliver on the vision of a resilient, lively, and distinct heart of the city for future generations.

- **Why would Capital E go in the Library?**

Capital E is Experience Wellington's principal provider for children and young people. Capital E ignites and fuels children and young people's creative spark, responding to the need for our youngest citizens to be creative, curious and connected. Their vision is to make growing up in the capital full of opportunities to play and create; and they aspire to be Aotearoa New Zealand's National Centre for Young Creatives, working with and through partners to maximize mutual reach and impact for this audience.

From ongoing discussions with Experience Wellington there is a strong desire for Capital E to return to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct and the opportunity to collocate in a Central Library building is possible in principle. There are synergies between the service provided both, particularly shared and aligned programming for young children their caregivers and teachers, school visits and workshops, or activities that cater to learning through creativity and play for children

of all ages. The feasibility of this will continue to be explored over the coming months by officers with Experience Wellington as well as through the public consultation and engagement process.

- **What about parking, will the Harris Street carpark reopen at the same time?**

We don't yet know as we need to consider how future developments and climate changes may affect the basement and carpark area. This will be considered as a part of the Te Ngākau Civic Precinct planning work.

- **How does the Council know the latest cost assessments are correct?**

As the estimates are based on high level concept designs there is potential for change. We will know more about the costs as the planning for the project progresses.

- **Why does it cost more to fix the building than build a new one?**

Before we can begin strengthening the existing building, the existing fit-out needs to be removed. Depending on the level of strengthening, temporary work may be needed to support the building while the strengthening work is carried out. This adds to the cost and time - essentially we go backwards a bit before we can go forward. However, this will all be tested and understood better as the design progresses.

- **When can we expect a Central Library building to open?**

We have provided indicative timeframes for each option. These are based on an assessment of the time needed for design, resource consent, and construction stages of the project. The timeframes also provide for potential delays in resolving heritage or other site issues.

- **How will this affect my rates?**

Options		Expected life (years)	Project cost (\$m)	Average increase for Average Residential Ratepayer
<b>Option A</b>	Low-level remediation	35	\$76.3 - \$90.8	\$38.70 - \$46.30 pa
<b>Option B</b>	Mid-level remediation	42	\$131.2 - \$151.8	\$57.30 - \$67.60 pa
<b>Option C</b>	High-level remediation	50	\$174.4 - \$199.8	\$74.30 - \$86.20 pa
<b>Option D</b>	New build on same site	64	\$156.0 - \$160.7	\$50.00 - \$52.60 pa
<b>Option E</b>	New build on another Te Ngākau Civic Precinct site	64	\$156.0 - \$160.7	\$50.60 - \$52.60pa

- **Why not pull it down and build a new library if it's cheaper?**

This is provided for in Option D New Building on Same Site. However, while the Central Library building isn't currently included as a heritage building in the District Plan, some people believe the building has historical value in its design and its contribution to Te Ngākau Civic Precinct. Heritage New Zealand are currently investigating adding the building to their Heritage list. Time for resolving heritage issues has been included in the timeframes for Option D.

- **Why can't the new Exhibition and Convention Centre or the money for this be used for the library instead?**

The Convention Centre project is too far down the track to stop and reconsider without significant cost and consequence. There are contracts in place and construction has started. For these reasons it is not a practicable option and has been excluded.

- **What if I like more than one option? Can I put forward a combination of your options?**

Absolutely - we want to hear any ideas you have.

- **How can I have a say again before the final decision?**

There are three stages to making this decision. The detail is set out on page 5. In this first stage you could make an oral submission to support your written

feedback - this will inform the option the Council puts into the second stage, the draft Long-term Plan. You'll have an opportunity to have your say on that as well.

- **Where can I find more information?**

There is a whole range of Council papers, media releases, customer surveys and engineering advice which have published over the past fifteen months. You can read these and additional information on the Council website [wellington.govt.nz/services/community-and-culture/libraries/central-library-closure](http://wellington.govt.nz/services/community-and-culture/libraries/central-library-closure)

- **Got other questions?**

- Visit our Let's Talk Wellington website [letstalk.wellington.govt.nz/central-library](http://letstalk.wellington.govt.nz/central-library)
- Subscribe for regular updates - sign up at [letstalk.wellington.govt.nz/central-library](http://letstalk.wellington.govt.nz/central-library)
- Email [centrallibrarysubmission@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:centrallibrarysubmission@wcc.govt.nz)
- Come along or tune in to our Speaker Events, visit our Tiny House or attend a branch Library event from mid-August
- Follow updates on [facebook.com/wellingtontcitycouncil](https://facebook.com/wellingtontcitycouncil)

