

# REGENERATIVE APPROACH

A REGENERATIVE PROCESS FOR CITYSIDE TO ALLOW US TO WALK BACKWARDS INTO THE FUTURE

“KA MUA, KA MURI”.

## WHAT IS REGENERATIVE PRACTICE?

This is a way of working which employs “systems thinking” to harness the potential of a project and/or place and ensure changes resulting from a project have a regenerative effect on all aspects of the place in which it is situated. This is in contrast to other models that assume a projects superiority over and above other considerations, often at the detriment of ecology, history, aesthetics and community life. The approach brings together various stakeholders with the aim of enhancing the wellbeing of the entire ecosystem of which the project/place is a part of.

## WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

After last year's AGM, a number of 'threads of exploration' were identified as currently taking place at Cityside. These included the A-team work; children and youth spaces; re-engaging with the 'statement of intent'; addressing needs of a diverse range of Citysiders; and the evolving Cityside rentals community (artist spaces, activist and social justice initiatives).

Off the back of this a proposal was put forward to Council with the suggestion of using a regenerative approach to further explore Cityside as a “place”, to help further inform these conversations..

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CITYSIDE

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There are three trained regenerative practitioners in our midst (Roxanne Haines, Justine Skilling and Damaris Kingdon) who have been meeting over the past year with Stu and Rosemary Dewerse (as council elected representative) to outline how this process could work for Cityside. *(This work was about to kick off in March just as we went into lockdown. It felt appropriate to put it on hold for a few months.)*

This will be a deep investigative and participatory process for Cityside. The intention is for it to move conversations away from an individual approach around “what I need or want Cityside to be”, and steer us towards a communal exploration of the essence of Cityside as a ‘place’.

It will allow us to explore and better understand the stories of this place (of the people, building and land), in a way that is consistent with our values as a community, so that we can continue to discern Cityside's unique contribution to our world. Looking back to uncover our story will help us to understand the essence/vocation of this place and will form a rich foundation for discussions and decisions on future aspirations.

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OUR AIM IS THAT IT WILL ALLOW US AS A COMMUNITY TO  
FURTHER ENGAGE AND EXPLORE THE QUESTIONS:

- WHAT IS THE SPIRIT SAYING TO CITYSIDE AT THIS TIME?
  - WHO/WHAT IS CITYSIDE BEING CALLED TO BE IN THIS PLACE?
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This process will explore the role of Cityside as part of a system including the natural and built environment, financial resources, social systems, and human development.

Regenerative Practice involves a deep exploration of the 'ground' of the project/place, utilising historical records and community story-telling alongside quantitative data, to begin to uncover the patterns that have shaped the geology, biology and culture of a place through time. The process of uncovering these stories allows space for the potential of a place to arise in people's collective imaginings, and builds a sense of the 'essence' (or spirit/ mauri/ vocation) of a particular place.

Through this journey "place" refers to here, 8 Mt Eden Road and its immediate surroundings. This takes into account the land that was here long before us, the stories of this place, the building and the people who interact with it. The process will also look at what it means for Cityside to have such a dispersed congregation and how we take a broader approach to place, using a systems approach.

## THEOLOGICAL LENSE

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God. All things came into being through God, and without God not one thing came into being. What has come into being in God was life, and the life was the light of all people"

(John 1:1-4)

A regenerative approach aligns nicely with the concept of the "Universal Christ", or "incarnational worldview" which resonates with many Citysiders. From this perspective, the entire physical world is seen as the "hiding place and revelation of God" (as often discussed by Richard Rohr).

In an incarnational worldview, Creation is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process throughout time. This understanding of God relies on processes of awakening, seeing and growth in consciousness and love, and on the pattern of resurrection and renewal, to move us onwards on the spiritual journey

For Cityside, a regenerative process will open us to the possibility of "seeing Christ" in the land, water, rocks, vegetation, other life forms, buildings, history, people, stories, struggles, celebrations, significant moments and everyday expressions of life in this place, and in the communities that anchor themselves here.

Seeing in this deeper way will give us an opportunity to discern where the spirit of God, or "life" is arising and flowing in this place, and help us visualise how as a place and as a community (or communities) we can work with the spirit to enhance the wellbeing of the whole (people, land, water, communities).

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## WHAT WILL THIS LOOK LIKE?

Cityside is a community that has a rich story of place. This further allows it to be shared by members both old and new and retold and added to over time in such a way that Cityside's unique identity would be cherished and loved and become a source of belonging for those that choose to gather here. We need to be knowledgeable of the local context and thus be empowered to be responsive to the natural evolution of our local demography in such a way as to become inherently relevant and vital to the character and wellbeing of the wider neighbourhood and communities that we find ourselves amongst.

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**KEY STORYLINES HAVE COME TO INFORM OUR CURRENT COMMUNITY AND THROUGH THESE WE ARE ABLE TO SEE OURSELVES IN THE CONTEXT OF HISTORY AND OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.**

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KEY FOCUSES FOR THESE WILL BE:



**Partnership & Treaty:** Come into relationship with Mana Whenua and have opportunity to practice partnership according to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and seek a just way of occupying Tuku Whenua land.



**Ecological:** Come to know the natural ecosystems of the land we occupy and find a way to play an active part in the preservation, regeneration and evolution of our unique landscape.



**Geological:** Come to know the geological and mythological history of our site and hold this knowledge in a way that brings rich understanding of our more ancient history as well as the ancient spiritual and earth based energies of this land.



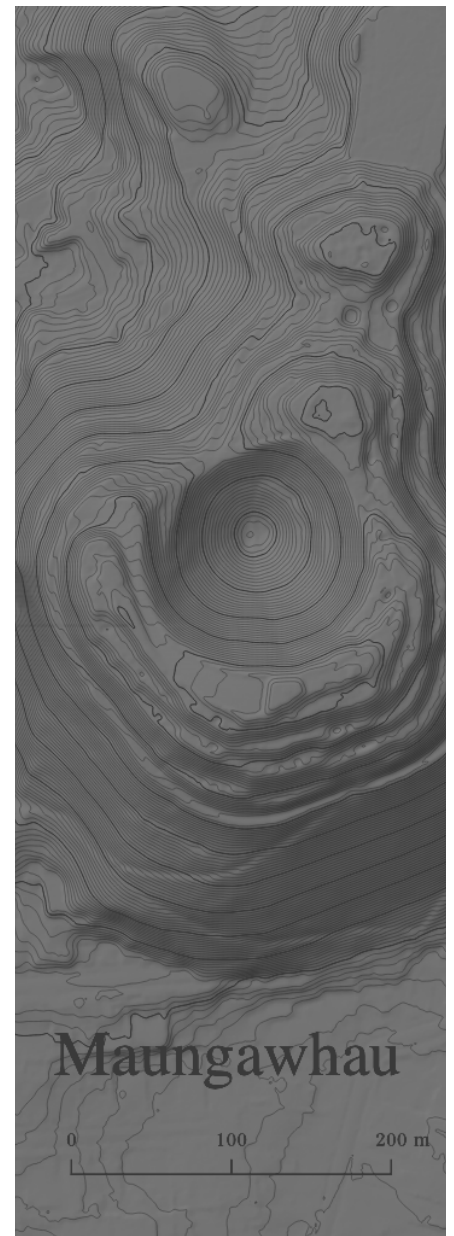
**Church History:** Come to know the intentions and aspirations of the Pākehā presence of this land, specifically the foundations of the Baptist church and various contributions to the wider community.



**Neighbourhood:** Come to a better consciousness of our current neighbourhood context and the immediate needs and demographic trajectories of growth; impacted by decisions of local government, property development, immigration and community development efforts.



**Emerging Storylines:** Making room for us to understand what other things that may emerge that have contributed to the ongoing story of this place. Eg. LGBTQ, Social Justice, Monastic community etc. Informing the story of the current Cityside community and how we see ourselves in the context of these things.



## GATHERING OUR STORIES

Alongside exploring the storylines we aim as a community to gather our own stories. This will allow Cityside as a community to then respond to this explored narrative, giving us the opportunity to share our stories, passions, visions and response to our stories of place over a period time.

The details of this will become more apparent in the next month or so, but being who we are, hopefully there will be an array of creativity and interest in sharing and capturing these.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND INFORMING FUTURE DECISION MAKING

The implementation of this process will allow us to practically understand what we can share in terms of activities and mission of what we wish to endorse and support as a church and how we can structure our systems of leadership to achieve these ends.

Looking at Cityside through a regeneration lens allows us to see it as a living system, engaged in processes of exchange with its surrounding environment.

The outcomes from this exploratory process will help shape how we continue into the future as new things emerge at Cityside, in such a way that new life, new health and new possibilities are able to come into this place. Not merely sustaining what is already happening, but instead allowing Cityside, the place in which it is located, and the systems with which it engages, to regenerate.

## NEXT STEPS...

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We are a couple of weeks away from kicking things off to begin this journey...

A large part of this work will involve gathering and deep diving into the historical, geographical, ecological and living narratives of this place. Through this process we will make space for discovery and reflection allowing us to unpack and sit with what we learn along the way. We are hoping this will be a meaningful time to explore and creatively express things as we go.

There will be all sorts of opportunities to be involved in this exploratory work. These will include a large variety of activities that might include workshops, service elements and other activities to be part of if you are interested.

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