



New Plymouth Central Area Urban Design Framework

2013
DM 1398140



Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Ngāmotu
NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL
newplymouthnz.com





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SECTION ONE

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The vision and principles for the future development of the Central Area are the result of community consultation and collaboration within Council. They respond to the information gathered and current best practice with Council endorsement and community buy-in. They apply to public and private development in the Central Area.

SECTION TWO- Themes Priorities + Actions

Pg 22 Key Themes

The themes indicate the Council's focus of activity to contribute to the shared vision.

Priorities and actions are included for each theme identified in this document. The scope of the 30 year action plan is set around co-ordinating and prioritising Council strategy, policy and capital projects along with minor improvement projects in the short term and investigations into viability of strategic projects for implementation in the long term.

Pg 24 Strengthen the Sense of Place

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NOTE- Background information in the form of the Urban Design Survey Response Analysis and Site Survey documents that were produced in the process of the draft Framework are available on the Council website.

The Purpose of an Urban Design Framework

The creation of the framework has involved looking at the Central Area, asking people questions and listening to people that use the area to better understand their requirements and aspirations for the Central Area.

Central Area Urban Design

In December 2011, the New Plymouth District Council passed a resolution to become a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol.

The Urban Design Protocol was developed in 2005 to assist development to consider best practice design in the urban environment. It was based on the need for guidance regarding urban environment management and was the result of collaboration between the Ministry for the Environment, a range of local government representatives and industry experts.

Urban design is the art of making a great place to live, work and play. It involves the appearance of the public realm and also the function and feel of urban spaces and buildings. Urban design focuses on the interactions between

buildings, streets and public space. It considers elements such as sustainable design, 'active' edges, accessibility, streetscapes and the mix of building uses.

“Urban design is concerned not so much with individual buildings, but with the building of a city. It’s about place making, and it’s also about the public realm.”

Peter Mould, Jury Convenor for 2012 Urban Design Awards.

On becoming a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol (UDP), the Council commenced implementing an UDP action plan. These actions included appointing an Urban Design Champion within the Council and formulating a Central Area Urban Design Framework.

As part of the development of the Urban Design Framework, contributions from residents, property owners, businesses, workers and visitors of the central area, has been sought by asking for their vision for this area in the Central Area Urban Design Survey.



An Urban Design Framework

The Ministry for the Environment Urban Design Toolkit defines an Urban Design Framework as:

'A document that describes an overarching vision and the intended outcome for an entire urban area and gives direction to subsequent policies and site specific initiatives within that area.'

The framework strategically sits beneath the Long Term Plan and District Plan and alongside other New Plymouth District Council strategies and policies. It may identify directions for further investigation within the scope of these other Council planning tools. It has a proactive encouraging approach for new development rather than being restrictive. It is envisaged the framework will guide council staff and elected representatives to influence their project work, plans and policies. It is anticipated this will carry through to the private sector to influence and provide clarity for investors, developers and design professionals. The public role for the framework is in setting the scene for urban design initiatives and improving the quality of New Plymouth's Central Area for people to live and work in.

The Framework aims to better integrate, advise and direct the development of the Central Area in such a way as to achieve good urban design outcomes. While there are many great urban design examples in the Central Area there are also areas where there is opportunity to do better, this

framework aims to moderately raise the bar in all urban design activities and assist new development to contribute to a shared vision for the Central Area in the next 30 years. The Framework focuses on the key components that make up the design and development process.

The framework stretches across the key Council strategic directions. It supports and adds detail to the New Plymouth District Council strategic intent:

New Plymouth District Council Strategic Intent

New Plymouth District will offer an attractive living environment that compares favourably nationally and internationally. It will do this to attract and retain the skilled labour force our community needs to grow and prosper.

The unifying purpose of all New Plymouth District Council services lies in creating an attractive living environment.

New Plymouth District Council will invest in, maintain, assist and encourage others to provide those diverse facilities, infrastructure and services that are needed to make New Plymouth District nationally and internationally a location of choice.

New Plymouth District Council, Long Term Plan

History and Significance

Tangata Whenua

There are many layers of history for the area that is currently known as the New Plymouth Central Area. There has been continual occupation of this area from time immemorial including Awanui-a-Rangi; the inhabitants Te Kahui Maunga (who it is claimed lived on a spur overlooking coastal Taranaki before the arrival of the mountain Taranaki); and the moa hunters. Today the Central Area is within the Ngāti Te Whiti rohe (tribal area).

The area extends from the Herekawe Stream to the Waiwhakaiho river, inland to its headwaters on Maunga Taranaki and back to Herekawe. Ngāti Te Whiti traces descent from its eponymous ancestor Te Whiti O Rongomai who lived in the late 1700s and today are the embodiment of the many former hapū and whanau groupings who lived within the present day area of New Plymouth. Ngāti Te Whiti mana whenua is founded on customary precepts of discover, descent, kinship and ahi kaa roa (long term occupation) (Mana Whenua Reference Group, 2006).

One of the most prominent features in the pre-european landscape of the Central Area was that of Puke Ariki Pā site. An imposing feature of the Central Area, it commandeered the mouth of the Huatoki Stream and extended as far as the present day cenotaph and Richmond Estate building.

Just a short distance away from Puke Ariki Pā, across the Huatoki where Centre City complex now stands was Te Kawau Pā. It was a kainga or village and held extensive cultivations which probably served to feed the vast numbers of inhabitants both from Te Kawau and Puke Ariki.

The smaller pā of Mawhera was located further inland along the Huatoki Stream, approximately where Radio Taranaki is situated. Mawhera Pā was tauranga waka or canoe landing site and provided a place where produce could be moved by waka to Mawhera and carried to the nearby pā site of Pukaka.



The Significance of the Central Area

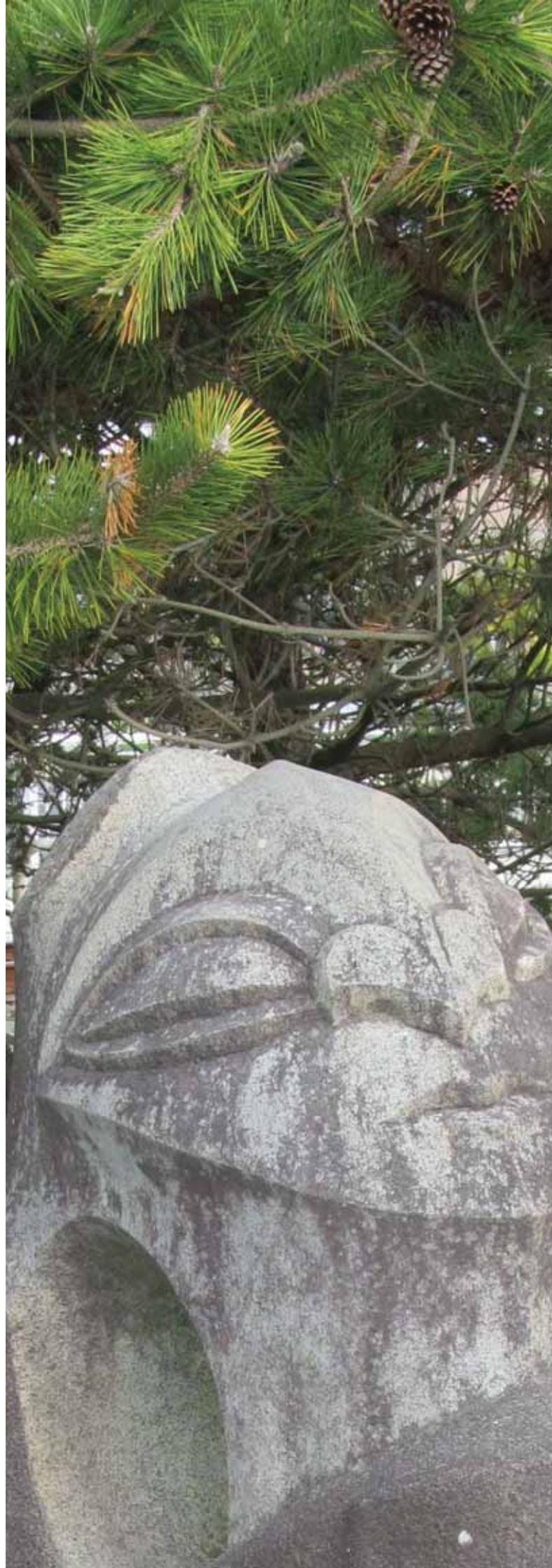
In urban development terms New Plymouth's Central Area is and has always been the district and region's most vibrant and active urban place since it was surveyed and the township established in 1863. It's important for the Central Area to maintain its vitality because its strength is closely tied to the strength of the district and region as a whole. Its key role is providing the commercial, cultural and social centre for the large district it serves. Over time these uses and activities shape the Central Area so that it reflects in a concentrated space the shared identity of the diverse Taranaki people. More energy, thought and understanding is required to make the Central Area into the best place it can possibly be to fulfil its role.

The Central Area is the district's primary commercial hub, and a focal point for business, tourism, retail and entertainment. If it is to remain a successful centre then it must look and feel successful. Potential investors need to be able to tell it is a secure place to invest in. The Central Area needs to attract the required workforce to live, work and play here: activities, amenities, environmental health and lifestyle opportunities are deal breakers for skilled workers. Recreational features, facilities and event venues are linked to the Central Area by the foreshore walkway and other off road pedestrian and cyclist routes in addition to the traditional transport network.

There is a residential population that wraps around the edges of the Central Area. Along with some recent CBD residential developments that expand the activity and viable hours of operation for some businesses. The Central Area is a shared meeting point for New Plymouth District residents.

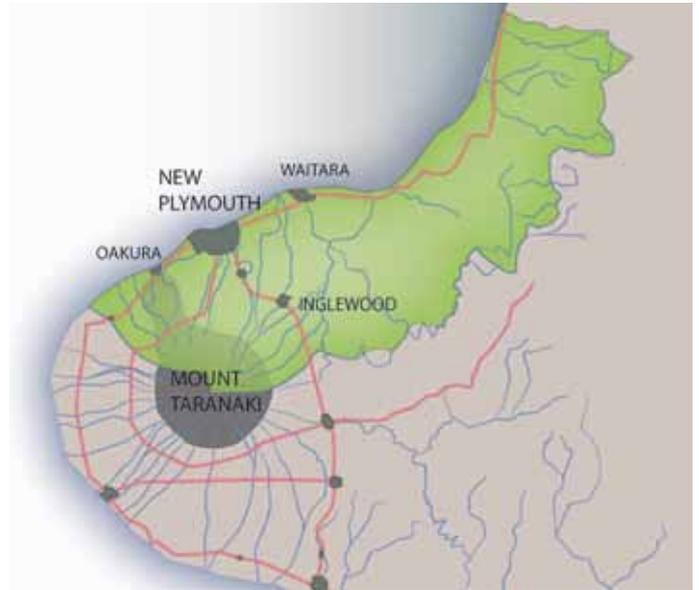
The Coastal Walkway, Puke Ariki Landing and Huatoki Plaza are key offstreet public spaces. The historic grid pattern of the Central Area streets and blocks provides a comprehensive system that is well linked to the wider transport network. The streets comprise a significant supply of public space.

The Central Area's urban environment is unique because of the richness present in the cultural history of the place, heritage buildings, public spaces and underlying natural environment.



New Plymouth Central Area

New Plymouth is home to a vibrant community on the central west coast of the North Island. Mount Taranaki forms the volcanic landscape of the ring plain. The distinctive network of rivers and streams as well as the dynamic coastline shapes the lifestyles of inhabitants and is inextricably linked to the experience of being in New Plymouth, Taranaki.



1 DEVON STREET THE PRIMARY RETAIL STREET HAS BEEN DESIGNED WITH WIDE SOUTH SIDE FOOTPATHS AND CONVENIENT MID BLOCK CROSSINGS.



2 CURRIE STREET IS A NOTIONAL CENTRE OF TOWN WITH HIGH PEDESTRIAN VOLUMES AND A RANGE OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES LOCATED ALONG THE STREET.



3 HUATOKI STREAM- WEIR AND FISH PASS



4 DEVON STREET ON STREET DINING AMONGST THE STREET TREES.



5 MOLESWORTH STREET BUILDINGS WITHOUT ACTIVE EDGES OPENING TO THE FOOTPATH ADJACENT TO THE FORESHORE



6 FRED CARRINGTON STATUE INSTALLED BY THE SURVEYORS INSTITUTE IN THE COURTHOUSE FORECOURT.



7 LEMON STREET RESIDENTIAL FRINGE THAT WRAPS AROUND THE COMMERCIAL CORE OF THE CENTRAL AREA.



8 A VIEW ALONG YOUNG STREET TOWARDS THE COMMERCIAL CORE WITH HIGH OCCUPANCY OF ON STREET PARKING.

Who delivers the Central Area Urban Design Framework?

Council

The Council considers good quality urban design is important to the future success of New Plymouth's Central Area. Council has a number of roles relating to the delivery of high quality urban design. These are as follows:

Leadership and Governance

Leading by example in development and redevelopment projects the Council undertakes on behalf of its ratepayers. Championing urban design and raising awareness.

Education and Advocacy

Providing information and advice in an easily accessible manner to the public and the development sector. Working to ensure the appropriate research, mechanisms, funding and support are in place to achieve good quality urban design.

Regulation

The Council's use of legislation to ensure poor quality design, with ramifications for the wider community, is avoided.

Collaboration

Council has the opportunity to participate in a number of partnerships that help deliver better community outcomes. Recognising and building on these partnerships is an important aspect of continued development of the urban environment.

Planning

Ongoing planning is used to find the most effective ways of delivering good quality urban design and meeting the needs of the community.

Property Owners + Developers

Property owners and developers have a significant influence over the market for, and delivery of, good quality urban design. Recognition of the value added to developments by improving design quality is growing. The key areas of contribution are:

- Demonstrating good quality urban design
- Working collaboratively with local government
- Supporting investments which illustrate good quality urban design principles
- Involving communities in projects

Organisations, Institutes + Consultants

Organisations, institutes and consultants involved in urban design have an important advisory role, amongst others. The key areas that organisations and institutes contribute are:

- Providing opportunities for training through seminars and continuing professional development
- Working collaboratively with the public and private sectors
- Advocating and promoting high quality urban design
- Undertaking research

Community

The community have a critical role as the users of the environment which is created through high quality urban design. In order to ensure that their needs are met the key role is in their participation. However it is not limited to this and also includes:

- Recognising the stewardship roles and responsibilities in contributing to urban environments.
- Working collaboratively with local government and participating in forums and consultation
- Practicing high quality urban design in regard to private property
- Advocating for and promoting high quality urban design

You told us...

The Central Area Urban Design Survey

Almost 200 responses were received from people in the New Plymouth District with something to say about the future development of the Central Area.

A site survey document that provides a snap shot of the various elements of the Central Area was made available online and in the District Libraries, Puke Ariki and the Civic Centre. This outlined information on the history; and the commercial, environmental, social and cultural aspects of the area as it is today. This also provides a useful benchmark for future surveys to monitor progress of the Urban Design Framework.

People were invited to share their thoughts on the Central Area over 3 weeks beginning in October 2012. A range of methods were used to reach people:

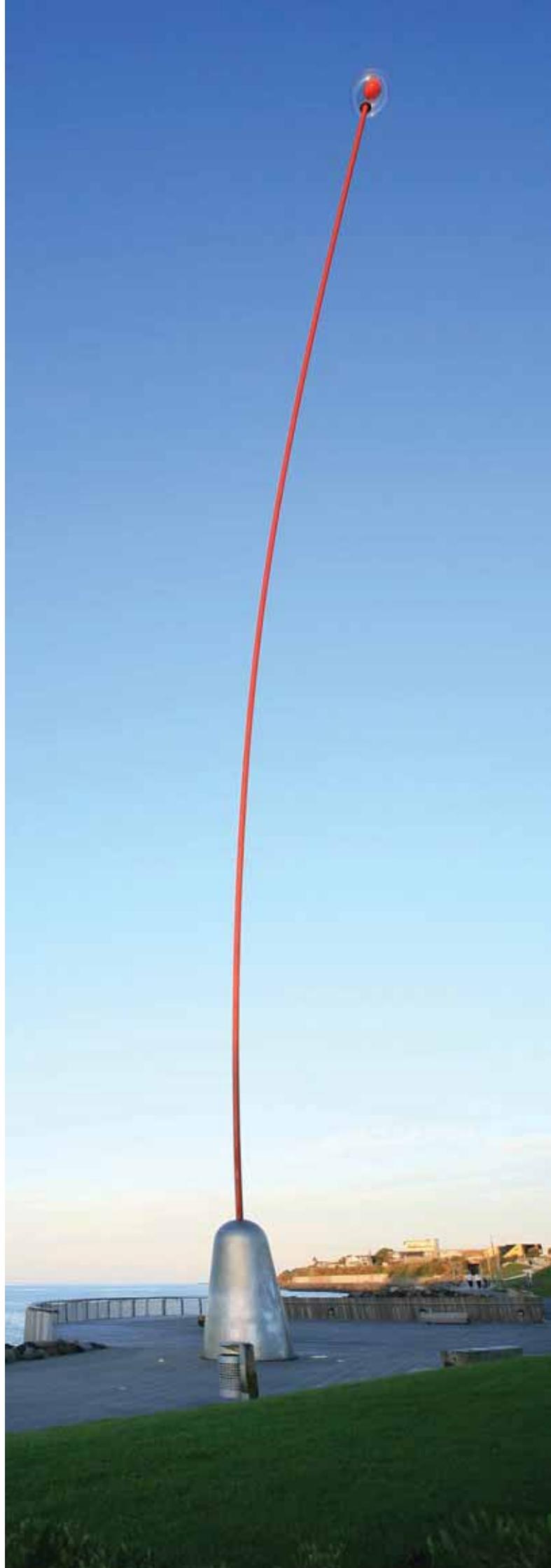
- Over 1000 letters with an enclosed survey were sent out to residents, property owners, business owners and tenants in the Central Area.
- The Daily News and Council media updates were sent out inviting everyone to fill in the survey.
- Emails were directly sent to a list of identified stakeholders who shared the survey with their networks and started discussions out in the public realm such as on the *Taranaki- Like no other* facebook page.
- The survey was made available on line.
- Touch pads were taken down to the Central Area to allow people in the area the chance to fill out their survey while they went about their daily business.

The survey results

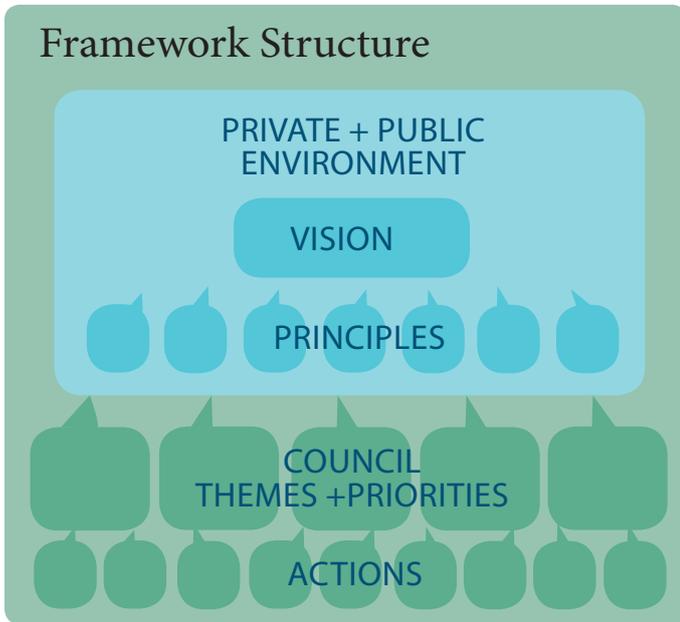
The information from the survey results is a key element of this Urban Design Framework

The survey response analysis along with the site survey document are available on line in a PDF format for your information.

The survey results are reflected in this framework.



Framework Structure



Vision

The central area will provide a vibrant, efficient and accessible public living room and business hub for the people of New Plymouth district

Urban Design Principles

- Context + Whanaungatanga
- Character, Rangatiratanga + Matauranga
- Choice + Kotahitanga
- Connection + Whanaungatanga
- Creativity
- Custodianship + Kaitiakitanga
- Collaboration

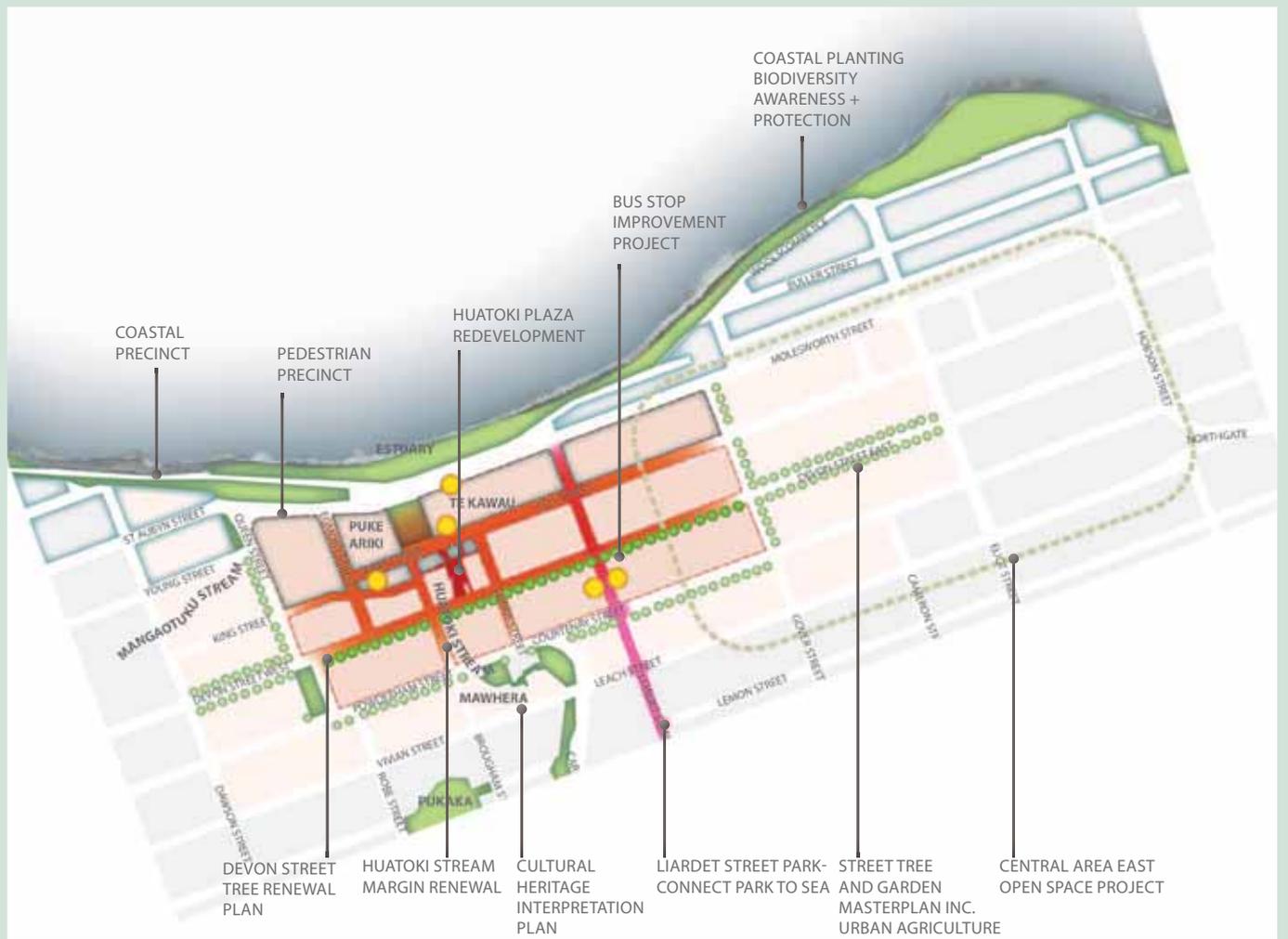
Themes and Priorities

<p><i>Strengthen the Sense of Place</i></p> <p>A Green Coastal Centre + Good Urban Manners: Ensuring new development is well designed and contributes positively to Central Area amenity; maintaining a human scale built environment.</p>	<p><i>Create Attractive Central Living</i></p> <p>People friendly buildings and spaces; A good mix of house types; Incentives.</p>	<p><i>Allow Freedom of Movement</i></p> <p>Pedestrian precinct; balance between users and human pace; public transport-letting people know and streetscape design.</p>	<p><i>Generate Lively Public Life</i></p> <p>A place to unwind; everyone's place; an active, green, diverse and safe environment.</p>	<p><i>Foster a Viable Market</i></p> <p>Support with infrastructure and services, accommodate growth.</p>
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Top 5 Actions

The top 5 actions are chosen as key projects that will make the most difference in achieving the Central Area vision. The pedestrian and coastal precincts and the Central Area East Open Space project have defined spatial boundaries which are illustrated in the map below. Good Urban Manners and Increased Housing Choices initiatives apply to the wider Central Area.

- *Pedestrian Precinct*
- *Good Urban Manners*
- *Increased Housing Choices*
- *Central Area East Open Space*
- *Coastal Precinct*





Framework Principles

The principles consider the elements necessary to achieve the vision. These principles work together but when applied to an individual development one principle may have a greater significance than another depending on the development.

In order to achieve the shared vision for the Central Area public and private development will positively contribute to the following framework principles. These principles draw strongly from the fundamental seven C's in the Urban Design Protocol and the work of Landcare Research on Maori Design Principles.

Context + Whanaungatanga

Good quality urban design considers individual projects as part of the whole Central Area and the district it serves.

Whanaungatanga is used to describe the connection of everything, the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs. This principle promotes relationships with people, the surrounding land and structures and activities. It involves participation of community and building pride in the outcome.

- The Central Area is developed in a way that optimises relationships between buildings, streets, adjacent buildings and properties, activities and networks.
- New development is a considerate neighbour to surrounding buildings and landuses. Development has regard to height, layout, building bulk and form of existing development.
- Respect for the past by enhancing the natural assets of the Central Area including the coastal environment, Huatoki Stream, other waterways and existing vegetation. Development works with the natural landforms of the Central Area.
- Development helps people to make connections with other people and the surroundings.
- Celebrate New Plymouth's unique identity, and the Maori and European culture and heritage.
- Incremental development positively contributes to the overarching vision and the New Plymouth Central Area.

Character, Rangatiratanga + Matauranga

New development reflects and celebrates the things that make the Central Area unique.

Rangatiratanga emphasises the need to maintain and enhance the unique Maori relationship with the environment and traditional protocols and values in the Central Area. This is especially relevant in identified places of significance. This can be a struggle in an ever changing environment and a place where many values need to be balanced.

Matauranga refers to the role of history, genealogy and traditions in shaping the environment.

- Development creates or contributes to a place that is locally inspired or has an otherwise distinctive character for example design reflects the coast and Mt Taranaki.
- Design in the Central Area reflects underlying cultural values of residents and those that access services in the area providing opportunity to acknowledge Maori rangatiratanga.
- Development reflects an understanding of the distinctive character and history of the Central Area.
- Buildings and places help people get around by marking key points, framing views and celebrating important places and features.
- Development complements existing buildings and places that are celebrated by the community and identified in the District Plan.



Choice + Kotahitanga

Choice of urban form, densities, building types, transport options and activities is valued.

Kotahitanga is defined as unity. In a design context it refers to development that links buildings, spaces and the surrounding environment in a unified and legible manner (Awatere, 2008). Spaces and environments are in unison and harmony with their physical surroundings. Physical spaces link and connect people and environment together.

- Kotahitanga requires creation of places that are inclusive of all people.
- Diversity and choice for people is maintained.
- There is exceptionally good access to open space and elements of the natural environment for residents and visitors in the Central Area.
- Design in the Central Area is accessible for all with a focus on providing good quality: Seats, Surfaces and Signs (the 3 S's of accessibility)
- Development is innovative and adaptive to local requirements.
- The aging population is catered for in the Central Area. Refer to the Global Age Friendly Cities Guide extract.

Global Age Friendly Cities Guide

What makes an urban environment good for older people:

- A pleasant and clean environment
- The importance of green spaces
- Somewhere to rest
- Age-friendly pavements
- Safe pedestrian crossings
- A secure environment
- Walkways and cycle paths
- Age friendly buildings
- Adequate public toilets

Connection + Whanaungatanga

Good quality urban design recognises and supports the networks required for a vibrant Central Area: streets, walkways, cycling routes, services, infrastructure and communication networks.

Whanaungatanga emphasises the need for the Central Area to help the community make social and environmental connections. It supports the idea of membership and participation within communities. Good design must encourage community participation and not isolate or segregate it's members.

- Development optimises connections between people and the environment.
- Buildings and places contribute to joined together networks rather than create isolated islands of activity within the Central Area. Walking connections are particularly encouraged.
- Development facilitates movement and exchange across the Central Area and with the wider district network.
- Efficiencies are achieved through convenient location of land use and activities within the Central Area.
- Precincts are identified and supported in relevant Council plans and activities.



Creativity

Good quality urban design encourages creative and innovative approaches in all aspects of development. New Plymouth has a history of innovation in industry, manufacturing and technology that the Central Area can build on. The Central Area also has a growing reputation for creativity in arts and cultural activities that inspires and creates excitement for people in the area. Creativity can turn a functional place into a memorable place.

Buildings in the Central Area have an important role. They don't just need to be well built and functional they also need to be delightful and well designed for those who: use the building, pass by the building or see it from their office or home (Vitruvius, c20BC) . The higher density of development, activities and people in the Central Area increases the importance of good quality building design.

- Creativity is recognisable in the Central Area's urban environment.
- Development seeks opportunities for innovation.
- Good practice, creativity and innovation is acknowledged and celebrated in development of the Central Area.
- Opportunities for incorporating art and creativity into building design are explored in new development.
- The Central Area streets and open spaces are attractive, incorporate art and utilise new technology.

Custodianship + Kaitiakitanga

Custodianship and kaitiakitanga is about community participation and efficient and effective resource management.

Sustainable use of the natural environment promotes community awareness of inherent values contained within the environment. It is important to identify and protect natural resources for current and future generations. Innovative design solutions are possible to preserve and protect significant natural assets.

- Urban design in the Central Area preserves and protects the significant natural resources.
- Development takes into account the life cycle costs of buildings and spaces. Energy efficiency is achieved.
- Ecological, cultural and amenity values are acknowledged and celebrated in Central Area development and infrastructure.
- Planning and development of the Central Area involves community and business representatives and stakeholders.
- Good quality community services, infrastructure, housing and access to natural areas in the Central Area contribute to people's overall wellbeing.

Collaboration

Experience elsewhere demonstrates that good urban design outcomes are best achieved where public and private sectors work together. A key to successful implementation of this Central Area Urban Design Framework will be for the stakeholders i.e. residents, developers, business and property owners, creative professionals and the Council to share and own the vision. The stakeholders will collaborate to realise the vision for the present and future generations.



Strengthen the Sense of Place

- Green Coastal Centre-
 - New Plymouth will promote healthy and sustainable living and business in the Central Area through best practice management of the natural environment and a good quality public space network.
- Good Urban Manners-
 - Ensuring new development in the Central Area is well designed and contributes positively to the amenity, sense of place and streetscape of the surrounding area.
 - Human scaled built environment.
- Respect for the past
- Identification and support for precincts and character areas

Themes and Priorities

These themes and priorities set the key areas of focus for the Central Area to achieve the vision. They comprehensively cover the Central Area, avoiding a fragmented approach. Each theme works together with the other themes creating a strong network.



Create Attractive Central Living

- People friendly spaces and good accessibility to nearby public places e.g. the Coastal Walkway, Pukekura Park.
- Promote a wide range of housing choices
- Investigate barriers to good quality medium density housing in the Central Area and develop appropriate incentives.



Allow Freedom of Movement

- Pedestrian Precinct- Balance between users; human pace and increased pedestrian permeability.
- Public Transport- Letting people know; traffic information and education.
- Streetscape Plan- Safe movement and an efficient network.



Foster a Viable Market

- Foster business development- taking care of business, case management, mainstreet coordination
- Incentives for good development (See Strengthen Sense of Place and Attractive Central Living)
- Public investment used as leverage for private investment



Generate Lively Public Life

- A Place to unwind; everyone's place; an active, green, diverse and safe environment.
- Public art
- Cafe seating
- Events
- Night time activities

Strengthen the Sense of Place

The identity of the Central Area is produced overtime through the interaction of people and activities located in the physical and natural environment.

Overtime the characteristic combination of these elements becomes a shared, distinctive and memorable image of the Central Area. Nationally, a need has been recognised to pay more attention to the outcomes of development in the urban environments.

A Central Area that can be distinguished from the rest of the urban environment and from central areas in other places through its attractive and characteristic environment is necessary to promote custodianship, a sense of belonging, heritage protection, legibility and a place people want to live, work and spend time in.

New Plymouths Central Area is unique in its coastal location and rolling topography. Visual and physical links with the coastal environment and Mount Taranaki set the scene for the Central Area.

Key Priorities

Green Coastal Centre

New Plymouth will promote healthy and sustainable living and business in the Central Area through best practice management of the natural environment and a good quality public space network. Creating a green coastal centre involves:

- Good quality open space provision in the Central Area
- Street tree location, species and suitability
- Biodiversity and coastal environment protection
- Huatoki Stream management

Good Urban Manners

Ensuring new development in the Central Area is well designed and contributes positively to the amenity, sense of place and streetscape of the surrounding area; maintaining a human scale built environment with active frontages.

Heritage and Cultural Heritage

Support the existing heritage and promote respect for and interpretation of the past.

Precincts

Identification and support for precincts and character areas.



Green Coastal Centre

City centres are typically built and highly modified environments as a by-product of the more concentrated activity and increased opportunity provided. Heightened awareness of sustainable management and increased demand for greater efficiency in business and resource use in the Central Area results in pressure for improved open spaces.

Open Space

The urban design survey responses showed that Central Area open space was the element people most commonly wanted to celebrate and recognise.

In relation to this 47% of people disagreed or strongly disagreed that the number of hard surface grey places was appropriate, this is balanced with 39% who agreed or strongly agreed the existing environment is appropriate. While the high degree of built and structured elements is expected in the Central Area there is room to balance the mix in the public and private realm. Options are not limited for greening the Central Area, properties with no open space can think outside the box to incorporate green relief e.g. green wall on the Taranaki Arts Festival Trust

building (pictured below) on the corner of Powderham and Brougham Streets.

The urban design survey showed that Puke Ariki Landing was people's favourite open space (pictured below left). The main reasons people provided for their most liked open space included the openness, greenness, connection, accessibility, ability to be used as a gathering place and the coastal or waters edge environment.

The site survey revealed a unique context with the renowned coastal environment and Pukekura Park in close proximity. There is a good range of open space types through out most of the Central Area. However, a deficiency of open space in the east of the Central Area from Huatoki Stream to Hobson Street between Molesworth and Lemon Streets was revealed.

Addressing the amenity of the Central Area East supports other key themes in the framework such as promoting residential development. A pocket park would address the amenity of Central Area East.

In addition, promotion for improved amenity in private development primarily in the east but applicable to the whole Central Area through provision of tree and garden planting, grass, paving and seating that is at least visually accessible to the public e.g. through the resource consent process, the case management process and informal discussion.



Huatoiki

D 1888



Huatoki Plaza

The reasons provided for peoples least favoured open space in the Central Area relate to the lack of activity, the dominance of concrete and the need for more landscaping. Huatoki Plaza was the most frequently identified open space that people like the least. Specific comments relating to Huatoki Plaza included:

- Inactive edges- businesses need to open out into the space and the space needs stalls and cafes.
- Remove the yellow canopy
- Too much concrete
- Needs more landscaping including plants, trees, lawn and seats
- Not a comfortable place to be in during the day due to too much reflection and glare
- The cold and windy environment needs to be addressed
- Needs seats near the Colliers building
- The inhospitable environment is a lost opportunity which leaves Huatoki Plaza empty and reduces the use to a thoroughfare

During the consultation period a landscape plan for the Huatoki Plaza was submitted by several of the adjoining land owners and local design and engineering professionals with a strong affinity for the New Plymouth Central Area. The alternative design addressed many of the major concerns expressed by survey respondents about the Huatoki Plaza.

Huatoki Plazas potential lies in the benefit of a stream side, central and easily accessible location. It should be noted that the Central Area requires a range of open space types to cater for various uses. A hard surface space provides for a great range of activities such as performance and market spaces without management being required for the wear of softer, more high maintenance ground covers. The general framework of the space is in place and it is the finer details that require addressing to support it's ongoing use. Good urban spaces are adaptable and evolve with the needs of the community.

In the interests of providing a vibrant and good quality public space network community opinion suggests the shortcomings of Huatoki Plaza need to be addressed.





Street Trees

The urban design survey asked people if they thought there was an appropriate number of street trees and open space: 45% of respondents agree there are an appropriate number of street trees and open spaces while 34% disagree. This indicates mixed views on the matter.

In addition, a response was received from the CBD Retail Group that drew attention to street trees. Street tree location, species and suitability have been subject to media attention and the recent Long Term Plan process. The alders in the central section of Devon Street are of particular concern.

While the maintenance issues with street trees has been publicly articulated the results of the survey and consideration of the objectives of street tree planting outline an alternative appreciation of street trees value to the environmental quality and amenity of the Central Area.

In order to address the street trees agreement is needed by all involved parties on the objectives and species selection criteria. In addition, a budgeted renewal plan for the Devon Street trees is required. It would be a significant loss of amenity to the Central Area if the alders were all removed at one time therefore it is proposed for a phased renewal plan to be put in place.

Street tree objectives as outlined in the Site Survey:

- Reinforce the rugged west coast environment.
- Emphasise the grid layout of the streets.
- Improve the effect of the exposed climate by filtering direct sunlight in summer time.
- Frame important views.
- Create a consistent street character.
- Contribute to a healthier environment.
- Celebrate the Central Area heritage and past land uses.
- Enhance key streets, entrances and precincts.
- Mitigate negative effects of the built environment e.g. blank facades.

The agreement would include species selection criteria such as: suitability to climate and soils, low water intake/drought tolerance, tolerance to pollution, appropriate mature tree height, complementary character and amenity, deciduous vs. evergreen, appropriate growth rate, low maintenance requirements, optimum biodiversity benefits, high pest and disease tolerance, limited limb drop, tendency for clear trunk growth, solar access, noninvasive root system, good longevity quality and appropriate form. The selection of species would be made by someone with specialist knowledge and be required to be in accordance with the adopted criteria.

It is proposed that the issue of street trees including determination of appropriate objectives, selection criteria and management is addressed as an action within this framework.





Huatoki Stream

The presence of water bodies and courses in the Central Area such as the coast and Huatoki Stream are powerful identity building elements in the environment. The urban design survey responses revealed that people strongly identify with these features.

The Huatoki Stream is identified as an important waterway in the District Plan. The site survey illustrated the existing state where it is built over and in places exposed; there are lost opportunities for biodiversity protection and enhancement, such as in Huatoki Plaza. The Department of Conservation provided further detail in their survey response:

'There are also opportunities to improve the banks of the Huatoki with rock placement and native plantings.'

Opportunities to improve the biodiversity and natural habitat of the Huatoki Stream need to be explored.

Biodiversity and Coastal Environment

The New Plymouth urban environment is recognised for the natural features and high degree of indigenous vegetation that contributes to the coastal environment amenity.

Huatoki Stream and the coastal margin are important contributors to the existing biodiversity and character of the Central Area. The foreshore has potential to provide habitat for lizards and blue penguin. Planting indigenous species as part of ornamental landscaping supports habitat creation.

The biodiversity function of these special environments needs to be maintained and enhanced. This aligns with tangata whenua environmental values and best practice water management.

The Central Area is in an ongoing process of turning to face the coast. This is recognised in the architecture and creation of physical links between the urban and coastal environment. The Coastal Precinct identified in the following pages aims to support this process.



Good Urban Manners

New Plymouth's Central Area has an eclectic built identity. It is a complex arrangement built overtime through the combination of physical and spatial elements to meet the communities changing needs and in response to fluctuating economic activity. The way the built environment is understood and appreciated is integral to the success of the Central Area. Ensuring new development in the Central Area is well designed and contributes positively to the amenity, sense of place and streetscapes is of key concern to the vision for the Central Area. The site survey revealed that Devon Street provided a lively and active main street environment however there was a mixed quality with other parts of the Central Area with some places even rated as dull and inactive. The slow rate of change experienced in the built environment increases the importance of getting it right with all future development. In the urban design survey more people disagreed (42%) than agreed (37%) that the quality of design and materials used for buildings are interesting and engaging. There is an opportunity to improve the quality of built development in the Central Area.

Specific priorities for the framework for the next 30 years include:

- ensure good quality design is achieved
- address human scale development
- encourage active frontages
- support heritage preservation

The Central Area is greater than the sum of its parts. Private development has a responsibility to develop individual parts of the central area in a way that contributes to a greater whole and is reflective of its environment.

Good urban design advice and regulation will create a place that works for people in the street, at work and home throughout the day and night.

External Design Review Panel and Design Criteria

What

The urban design survey showed strong support for increased design guidance in the Central Area. Design criteria is proposed to be applied to new development in the Central Area and administered by an external Design Review Panel. The proposed assessment criteria reflects the general principles for the Central Area vision and provides a greater level of detail that is more applicable to individual private development projects.

Criteria to determine the types of proposals to be considered by the Panel will be developed.

When

A trial period is proposed: 2013 - 2014. During this time the Panel's advice is advisory and relies on good will and business sense of the private developer and the consent planner to implement the Panels recommendations.

Who

Recent development activities in the New Plymouth District have benefited from the advice and input of external professionals from a range of disciplines. The advantage of a multidisciplinary approach to planning and land use activities is recognised. The potential of formalising an avenue for external community input into significant land use and development decisions by setting up a trial for an independent Design Review Panel is proposed.

It is proposed to establish an external Design Review Panel that uses the assessment criteria as their terms of reference for reviewing Central Area development proposals.

Panel membership would comprise of members that have been nominated by local design and development institutes. In addition there maybe members who respond to a request for expression interest to ensure the full range of skills are provided for.

Good Urban Manners Design Criteria

<p>Site Context</p>	<p><i>The relationship and contribution of the development to the wider New Plymouth District and the site context including the coastal environment.</i></p> <p><i>The relationship of the development to the street or road, public spaces, adjacent buildings or properties, existing vegetation and to the character of the surrounding urban area with a higher built density than other parts of the Districts built environment.</i></p> <p><i>Ensuring protection and recognition of listed heritage buildings and sites along with the settings; new development complements existing heritage buildings and settings.</i></p> <p><i>Buildings respond to prominent corner location with relative increased massing, facade detail and entrance location that emphasises the corner location.</i></p>
<p>Building Appearance</p>	<p><i>General design principles, including scale and composition, architectural details, articulation of facades, active ground floor frontages and the treatment of rooftops are addressed.</i></p> <p><i>The extent to which the building exterior contributes positively to the streetscape by reflecting the form and function of the building e.g. facade design, depth in facade, good quality materials, a range of materials composed to produce a visually pleasing richness in the design or articulate the uses of the building and distinguish features.</i></p> <p><i>The positive relationship with existing heritage buildings and character buildings, cultural features and significant natural landscapes or features in the site context.</i></p> <p><i>The extent to which a buildings scale, including height and width, is in keeping with the surrounding environment and contributes to streetscape amenity.</i></p> <p><i>Building entrances are placed in clear and legible locations.</i></p>
<p>Street Interface</p>	<p><i>The location of activities and their relationship with the street and public spaces, particularly on the ground floor in the urban context. In primary retail streets there should be a minimum of 10 units per 100m of building with a diverse range of activities and no closed units.</i></p> <p><i>Within the Central Area core transparent glazing is between 50 and 80% coverage for the ground floor.</i></p> <p><i>Convenient provision for circulation and servicing including the design of pedestrian and vehicle entrances, and access to and around buildings.</i></p> <p><i>The integration of art works into the development.</i></p> <p><i>Within the Central Area core buildings should have minimal boundary setback with street edge continuity provided for 80% of the street frontage.</i></p>
<p>Car Parks, Pedestrian Circulation and Internal Landscaping</p>	<p><i>There is good amenity and quality of outdoor spaces associated with the development.</i></p> <p><i>Safety for users and passersby and adoption of Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles in the development design.</i></p> <p><i>Barrier free access is integrated into good quality pedestrian circulation</i></p> <p><i>Car parking shouldn't be visually prominent from the street. Vehicle entrance ways should aim to be from service streets easy and pleasant pedestrian circulation is provided.</i></p>
<p>Living Environment</p>	<p><i>Residential development acknowledges the commercial character of the Central Area and provides for a good level of amenity for residential accommodation including outlook, sunlight access, visual and acoustic privacy, ventilation, size and design.</i></p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p><i>The use of low impact design and efficient infrastructure, for example in naturalised stormwater systems, shared space and promotion of active transport modes. The design of buildings to maximise sustainability, for example in water heating, lighting, heating, natural ventilation and stormwater reduction, treatment or re-use.</i></p> <p><i>Efficient energy use within the buildings and in relation to the entire development.</i></p>

Human Scale Built Environment

One of New Plymouth's distinguishing features is the relative low rise built environment that maintains a human scale. The District Plan maximum height limits of 14 and 10m cover relatively large areas (the relevant objectives and policies of the plan are included in Appendix 1). 14m is equivalent to a 4 storey building approximately depending on the intended use. At these heights it is possible to retain access to the sun on the streets and views to the mountain and sea. Views to the sea are widely valued in the Central Area; the District Plan identifies key view points and there are rules that manage the effect of new development on the view.

The majority of buildings in the Central Area are people friendly as they do not dominate over the street and create unpleasant environmental conditions such as shade and strong wind channels.

Human scale development retains a link with the street which has a positive effect on safety. Views from these low rise buildings onto the streets and public spaces provide a perception of safety; people overlooking from windows can recognise faces or hear sounds that would otherwise be undetectable from taller buildings. People in low rise buildings can more easily wander out doors and take part in activities on the street which promotes an active and vibrant Central Area.

Low rise built environments can accommodate a more consistent spread of activity. Given the existing 1-3 storey basis of the Central Area the existing building height limits would seem to retain fair overall capacity for development. Further information is required to analyse the existing capacity.

The responses to the Urban Design Survey revealed that there is strong community support to retain the current building height limits to manage future development; 63% agreed or strongly agreed existing building height limits were

appropriate and 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed. While the survey results show there is a clear preference for the status quo it is not unanimous. There are mixed views on the building heights.

Recently, New Plymouth has experienced development pressure for buildings over the height limit. Some proposed developments did not gain consent to build over the height limit at 22 - 23m.

The planning process for these developments explored issues for building heights such as the effect of close proximity of taller buildings to waahi tapu sites, open spaces, the coast and established residential development. The maintenance of public view points. The surrounding built context including the scale of heritage buildings and underlying topography are important considerations when taking into account the appropriateness of taller buildings in an existing built environment.

These development proposals express the current demand for higher buildings in the Central Area. In addition, there are potential constraints to Central Area growth such as the location of the State Highways to the north and south; the physical limitations on the length of a viable centre and a low level of vacant spaces in the Central Area.

Maintaining a human scale built environment without unnecessarily limiting development opportunities will be addressed in the District Plan Review.

Detailed analysis of the existing environment in the Central Area is required to gain an understanding of the actual development capacity. Current technology would allow a 3d model of the Central Area to be created and different scenarios to be tested. This information allows in depth assessment of potential effects on the surrounding built environment, the identified view shafts and the overall effect on the character of the Central Area.



Maximum Building Heights in the Central Area





WHITE HART HOTEL

Heritage

The Central Area has many built structures and features that tie the current environment with the past. Many buildings are recognised for their heritage value with District Plan Heritage item listings.

The Council recently adopted a Heritage Strategy to support heritage protection and guide decisions. The Urban Design Framework supports implementation of the strategy through proposed actions that complement the objectives of the strategy

- Urban Design assessment criteria that places value on sensitive design of new development in the context of existing heritage buildings and features.
- Actions that are designed to protect and enhance the sense of place in the Central Area that draw upon the links with the past distinguishing the Central Area as a unique urban environment.
- Recognition and enhancement of precincts.
- Emphasis of the importance of District Plan mechanisms in the protection and enhancement of Heritage buildings and features e.g. identified viewshafts through the Central Area and existing notable trees.

Cultural Heritage

The Ngāti Te Whiti and Te Atiawa landscape is difficult to identify in the current design of New Plymouth's Central Area despite the lengthy occupation of the area. Only a few names such as Puke Ariki, and the Huatoki Stream remain to remind us of an earlier people. It is therefore important for the traditional icons of Ngāti Te Whiti and other Ngāmotu hapū to be reinstated and placed alongside existing ones.

Exploring the productive qualities of the Central Area through urban agriculture practices is a method of referencing past land use and occupation.

Māori concepts, place names, identifying natural features, landscapes, sites of significance and prominent tupuna need to be celebrated through the urban spaces that are created. For example, during the development of the New Plymouth Heritage Strategy, the Tangata Whenua Heritage Reference Group noted a strong desire for Council to consider recognising view shafts which provide sightlines directly to their ancestral mountain, Maunga Taranaki. Maunga Taranaki is the source of cultural identity and mana for all iwi in the region and as such, providing places within the Central Area where this icon can be viewed would be of value to tangata whenua.

Precincts

The urban design survey showed that 45% of respondents believed that activities can too easily occur in places that have a negative effect on the existing environment. This is a complex matter requiring regulatory and non-regulatory approaches. One method to address this is with the use of precincts within the Central Area.

The responses from the survey also showed an appreciation for appropriate land uses in different areas through such comments as 'waste of prime location' 'inappropriate development for this location' or 'good coastal location'.

People also showed in their responses to the urban design survey they appreciated particular qualities of favoured buildings such as heritage, character, good design quality, interesting, well maintained, beautiful and distinctive.

Such concepts may be recognised and provided for through the use of precincts in the Central Area.

The Urban Design Framework promotes the identification and enhancement of precincts and character areas.

Methods may include:

- capital investment
- promotion
- tailoring urban design advice to accommodate recognised activities and land uses
- Adapting streetscape treatments to reflect the precinct identity.



Cultural Precinct

The recognition of complementary land uses and heritage features in an area to the west of Huatoki Stream has led to the identification of a cultural precinct.

This area has been the centre of activity and development since it was occupied by Ngati Te Whiti prior to European settlement. It was the central hub for European settlers on arrival with the area around the Huatoki Plaza being used as a ship yard. Today the precinct contains some of the most admired and valued features of the Central Area e.g. Puke Ariki.

This area demonstrates many of the positive qualities of built development referred to in the survey response and is critical in providing the sense of identity for the Central Area e.g. the Cultural Precinct- the area around the clock tower, TSB Show Place, the Govett Brewster Art Gallery and the two storey timber shops e.g. Kina.

Design advice can focus on enhancing the essential qualities of the key buildings such as building height, window and door location etc. by guiding new development to respond to the identified characteristics in a positive manner.



Pedestrian Precinct

Precincts can also function based on clustering of compatible activities, such as Devon Street's retail function or the area around the courthouse where legal services have established. This type of clustering can increase efficiency, provide confidence in terms of landuse for developers and strengthen peoples association and understanding of areas. Design advice focussing on the dominant function can be useful e.g. the defined retail frontage area is already identified in the District Plan and has associated requirements.

The 30kph slow zone is identified as a pedestrian precinct that functions as the inner core of the Central Area. The pedestrian precinct is further outlined in the freedom of movement section.



Coastal Precinct

The importance of the Coast in contributing to the unique sense of place for the New Plymouth Central Area is outlined in the Coastal Strategy. The experience of being on the coastal walkway is one of the key features of New Plymouth that residents and visitors associate with the place. Enhancing connections and access between the city and the sea is a long term strategy for New Plymouth that is identified in the Coastal Strategy. Recognising place names and stories of the coastal environment is another mechanism to enhance the identity of the Central Area.

Many comments in the urban design survey were focussed around suitable landuses and building types on the coastal edge. Puke Ariki, Brougham Street and the along the Huatoki Stream tie the Central Area with the Coast and allow for easy movement between the two areas.

Conversely, there are some developments that do not make the most of the prime location and face their backs to the sea especially at streetscape level.

From time to time development proposals arise that include taller buildings along the foreshore. To date the community has not accepted this form of development along the coast. Producing advice on appropriate development for the Coastal Precinct would ensure the long term protection and enhancement of the significant asset of views and access to the coastal environment from the Central Area while providing confidence to developers on the future vision for the area.

Strengthen the Sense of Place Actions

Legend

 New budget required

 Existing/ requires alignment

Priorities	Action	Measure	New or Existing
Green Coastal Centre	Create a master plan for the Central Area that takes into account the following actions and provides increased detail for implementation.	Detailed plan for the future development of the Central Area available for incremental implementation as opportunity arises.	
	Provision of good quality open space in the Central Area.	Improved amenity and accessibility to open space for the eastern half of the Central Area.	
		Promotion of improved amenity and landscaping opportunities in the eastern half of the Central Area.	
	Investigate opportunities for Huatoki Plaza redevelopment in the 2015-2025 Long Term Plan process.	Increased use of the Huatoki Plaza throughout the year.	
	Central Area Street Tree and Garden Master Plan. Produce draft objectives and selection criteria for Street Trees and Gardens. Devon St tree renewal programme. Investigate opportunity for more onerous landscaping requirements for commercial frontages in the District Plan Review.	Consistent Street Tree and Garden treatments, enhanced streetscape character.	
	Review the Trading in Public Places Bylaw to foster and provide for good quality and viable business to activate public places in the Central Area with specific provisions for Huatoki Plaza.	Vibrant public places in the Central Area.	
	Maintain and enhance the biodiversity function of the Central Area.	Improved habitat quality.	
	Investigate opportunities for daylighting and improved accessibility to and along the Huatoki Stream	Improved stream quality and pedestrian accessibility.	

<i>Priorities</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>New or Existing</i>
<i>Good Urban Manners</i>	Develop Urban Design Criteria to apply to Central Area development.	<i>Improved design outcomes for new development in the central area.</i>	
	Implement a trial period for an external Design Review Panel.		
	Formulate design guidelines for development within the Central Area with specific reference to building height.		
	Gather information for the District Plan Review regarding the capacity of the current building height regime; develop a 3d model of the Central Area to allow in depth analysis of the implications of alternative management regimes.	<i>Maintain human scale development and provide for future development demands.</i>	
	Identification and enhancement of precincts through a focussed brief.	<i>Improved shared recognition of a unique Central Area character.</i>	
		<i>Articulated vision for development of Precinct areas.</i>	
	Enhance connections and access between the city and the sea.	<i>New development contributes to the identified Precinct character.</i>	
		<i>Improved access between the city and the sea.</i>	
	Support implementation of the Heritage Strategy through the Urban Design Framework.	<i>Protection and enhancement of Central Area Heritage items and values.</i>	
Develop a Cultural Heritage Interpretation Plan for the Central Area.	<i>Enhanced representation and community awareness of cultural heritage in the Central Area.</i>		
Explore opportunities for Urban Agriculture in the Central Area.	<i>Enhanced productive landscapes in the Central Area.</i>		
Review the District Plan viewshafts and look for opportunities to address views to Mount Taranaki.	<i>Protection and enhancement of views to Mount Taranaki.</i>		

Create Attractive Central Living

The results of the urban design survey showed strong support for an increased resident population in the Central Area.

Residents of the Central Area will have convenient access to New Plymouth's premium public spaces, cultural facilities, dining and entertainment venues and high quality urban environments. People will be able to easily get around the district using the well connected transport network and the off road pedestrian and cycle paths. In a place that is the scale of New Plymouth people living in the Central Area will enjoy the benefits of inner city living without sacrificing amenity and access to the outdoors.

Good quality medium density housing benefits all residents in the Central Area. More people living in the Central Area will create a more lively and attractive place. It will activate public space throughout longer times during the day, create a broad range of business opportunities, make the most of existing infrastructure, balance the rural and suburban greenfield growth and contribute to a safer environment.

This theme is pitched at an advisory level. The rate of change and residential development in the Central Area is likely to be conservative. This is based on the Districts current and predicted rate of growth and the predicted trend of one third total growth as infill throughout the urban environment as outlined in the Council's Framework for Growth document.

Key Priorities

People friendly spaces

New Plymouth will promote a healthy and sustainable living environment through the provision of a good quality public space network. Adoption of best practice design and implementation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in development will contribute to a place people want to live. The opportunity for private development to contribute will be identified in the external Design Review Panel advice.

A wide range of housing choices

In order to support growth in the Central Area residential stock information on successful housing arrangements for the area will be promoted on the Council website. MfE have compiled good quality yet cost efficient case studies from New Zealand's key urban centres.

Investigate the potential barriers to good quality medium density housing in the Central Area and address with appropriate incentives.

Until relatively recently there were promising levels of new residential development in the Central Area. More analysis and investigation is required to determine the most influential factors for housing in the Central Area. So that appropriate methods to support residential development in the Central Area can be determined.

Provide advice for adaptive reuse of old buildings into residential uses.

Providing clear, accurate and easy to understand information regarding the building code requirements for the adaptive reuse of old buildings is a critical element to support their retention. Buildings and historic features of buildings can be unnecessarily lost because information is not easily available.



ABOVE: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE HERITAGE LISTED KINGS BUILDING ON THE CORNER OF DEVON AND BROUGHAM STREETS.



ABOVE: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE CORNER OF KING AND BROUGHAM STREETS.

When it comes to housing, one size does not fit all. There are a number of national trends that influence housing types:

- An increasing demand for a wide range of housing choices especially affordable housing.
- The aging population and the associated housing preferences of older people e.g. easy accessibility, close proximity to essential services.
- The increased demand for more sustainable housing.
- The cost of living including energy prices driving down the demand for traditionally large stand alone dwellings.
- Increased awareness of the value of the rural environment e.g. signals emerging from central government for heightened protection of productive soils.

These national trends have led to growth in the market for smaller houses and medium density housing. Housing choice is an emerging central government issue.

The benefit to the district of increased residential development in the Central Area is a more efficient, active and vibrant place to work, do business and visit, if not live.



People friendly spaces

Parts of the Central Area would not be attractive to new residents and investors. Areas of the eastern half of the Central Area are without convenient access to open space. Residents need good access to an outdoor space where they can relax and play. The opportunity of establishing an additional open space in Central Area East should be investigated.

In addition, streets are important scene setters and linkages; attractive paving, street furniture and planting help to create a good quality urban environment that people want to live in. Building on the existing good quality pedestrian core of Devon, Currie and Brougham Streets is a priority to enhance the living environment for new residents.

A wide range of housing choices

The Central Area would benefit from expanding the range of housing choices available. Recent apartment development has been targeted at the high end of the market. There is an opportunity to increase housing choices in central area living, especially for young skilled workers looking for a good quality environment to live and work and to enter the housing market, older residents looking to down size and residents without large families. Tailoring housing to meet the needs of the intended market is important.

Elderly peoples housing is designed with sufficient storage space, good solar access and passive air flow along with opportunity for social interaction.

While the requirements of medium cost housing may be more modest the essential qualities of noise insulation and access to sunlight cannot be compromised upon. The external design review panel provides an opportunity to address these matters.



Investigate the potential barriers to good quality medium density housing in the Central Area and address with appropriate incentives

Greater detail is required in order to most efficiently address central area housing development and to understand the dynamics that influence the development.

There are many potential mechanisms available to incentivise good quality residential development in the Central Area e.g. development contributions relief, consent fee waivers, development rights trade offs. Once more analysis has been undertaken it will be possible to specifically tailor the Central Area incentives to ensure they are most effective in promoting medium density housing in the Central Area.

Advice and assistance for adaptive reuse of old buildings into residential uses.

Much of the Central Area is developed and there is a high proportion of heritage or older buildings. There is also an ample supply of office space within the Central Area. While the older buildings contribute to the character of the place and have other benefits they can also create development barriers and restrict alternative uses such as for residential dwelling. Building code requirements to retrofit these older buildings for residential use can be prohibitive to development e.g. earthquake prone building strengthening requirements. This can lead to buildings being under utilised or vacant which has a detrimental effect on the vitality of the Central Area.

Established mechanisms such as the Council Case Management Project provides an opportunity to provide advice on the most efficient methods of addressing such issues and whether there are available avenues for assistance e.g. the Heritage Fund. Adapting the criteria for existing funds such as the Heritage Fund to include renovations to heritage buildings that allow new residential uses would raise awareness of the issue and encourage property owners to undertake this sort of activity.

Other opportunities exist, such as within the consent process, to make available expert advice on renovations for residential retrofitting of old commercial heritage buildings in the Central Area.

LEFT: NEW PLYMOUTH 1926



Create Attractive Central Living Actions

Legend



Priorities	Action	Measure	New or Existing
<i>People Friendly Places</i>	Investigate opportunities for an additional Central Area open space in the east.	<i>Improved amenity and accessibility to open space for the eastern half of the Central Area.</i>	<i>See Strengthen Sense of Place Actions</i>
	Investigate opportunities to creatively adapt streetscapes into attractive places for people within existing budgets.	<i>More lively streets with higher pedestrian volumes.</i>	 Existing
<i>Wide Range of Housing Choices</i>	Promote information and published case studies on good quality medium density housing choices on the website and in information receptacles in Council Service Centres.	<i>Increased public awareness of a range of housing types.</i>	 NEW
<i>Incentives for Housing</i>	Investigate barriers to medium density residential development in the Central Area.	<i>Increased residential development and a mix of development types in the Central Area.</i>	 NEW
	Amend Heritage Grant assessment criteria to include consideration for adaptive reuse.	<i>Increased retention and value of heritage buildings.</i>	 Existing
	Provide advice for adaptive reuse of old buildings through the use of guidelines and technical experts.	<i>Increased retention of character buildings.</i> <i>Retained character in the Central Area.</i>	 NEW
	Develop an appropriate medium density incentives package for the Central Area.	<i>Increased residential development in the Central Area.</i>	 NEW



Allow Freedom of Movement

The transport network is a critical feature in the Central Area that structures movement and contributes strongly to economic viability as well as the sense of identity.

The Council plays a large role in the planning and provision of an efficient transport network in the Central Area. Councils investment in this area is one of the most significant single contributions in creating a place that people want to spend time in, invest in and care about.

The Central Area transport network provides for a wide range of mode choices such as foot, bicycle, public transport and private motor vehicle. The survey showed there is a high proportion of private vehicle use, this was followed by pedestrians. The proportion of respondents that used public transport was low. It is not surprising then that large amounts of the Central Area are dedicated to provision for private vehicles. The site survey document showed many Central Area streets have more than 80% of the width dedicated to motor vehicle use. This is disproportionate for the number of other users e.g. pedestrians.

The level of intervention aims to balance the provision for different road users. It is pitched at building on the existing high quality work already undertaken such as the upgrades on Devon and Brougham Street. Improving the balance for pedestrians in places that have the highest levels of pedestrians and pedestrian focussed activities is the most efficient way forward.

At some point in every daily trip we are pedestrians and the larger the proportion of each trip that is dedicated to walking the better for the Central Area amenity. Attractive and lively streets is a key factor in achieving the vision for the Central Area.



LEFT: CYCLIST ON DEVON STREET.
ABOVE: RAIL OVERPASS AT THE END OF LIARDET STREET

Key Priorities

Pedestrian Precinct

The core of the central area has recently adopted a 30kph speed zone; this reflects a changing need from the community to raise the priority for a safe and more balanced transport network for all street users. Developing the 30kph zone into an identifiable pedestrian precinct through the use of slow street design is a key priority.

Public Transport

There is opportunity to improve the infrastructure for the public transport system. Bus stops need to be convenient and dignified waiting areas so more people will be lured onto the public transport system. Information on the bus service should be provided in an easily accessible manner.

Streetscape Plan

The streetscape plan is about providing all people in the Central Area the freedom to move safely in an attractive environment. It improves efficiency by rationalising street design and minimising the range of streets elements so that maintenance and renewal is a more streamlined process.

Car Parking

It is recognised that car parking is an important consideration to address in order to cover the full scope of a successful transport network. However, car parking is not addressed in this Framework because it is being comprehensively dealt with in a complementary project focussed on car parking in the Central Area and the wider District.

Cities can be designed in ways that improve the health of New Zealanders and reduce health service costs.

Public Health Advisory Committee, 2010

Pedestrian Precinct

The long term vision is for streets within the 30kph pedestrian precinct to become self enforcing slow speed environments through their design. Slow streets have narrow carriageways, wide footpaths or include shared spaces.

The existing design of Devon and Brougham street are good case studies for slow street design. Importantly, this initiative provides for all street users including motorists. Successful design of slow streets provides for barrier free vehicle movement but requires slow and careful manoeuvring. Providing environments that cater for all users can improve the health and well being of the district.

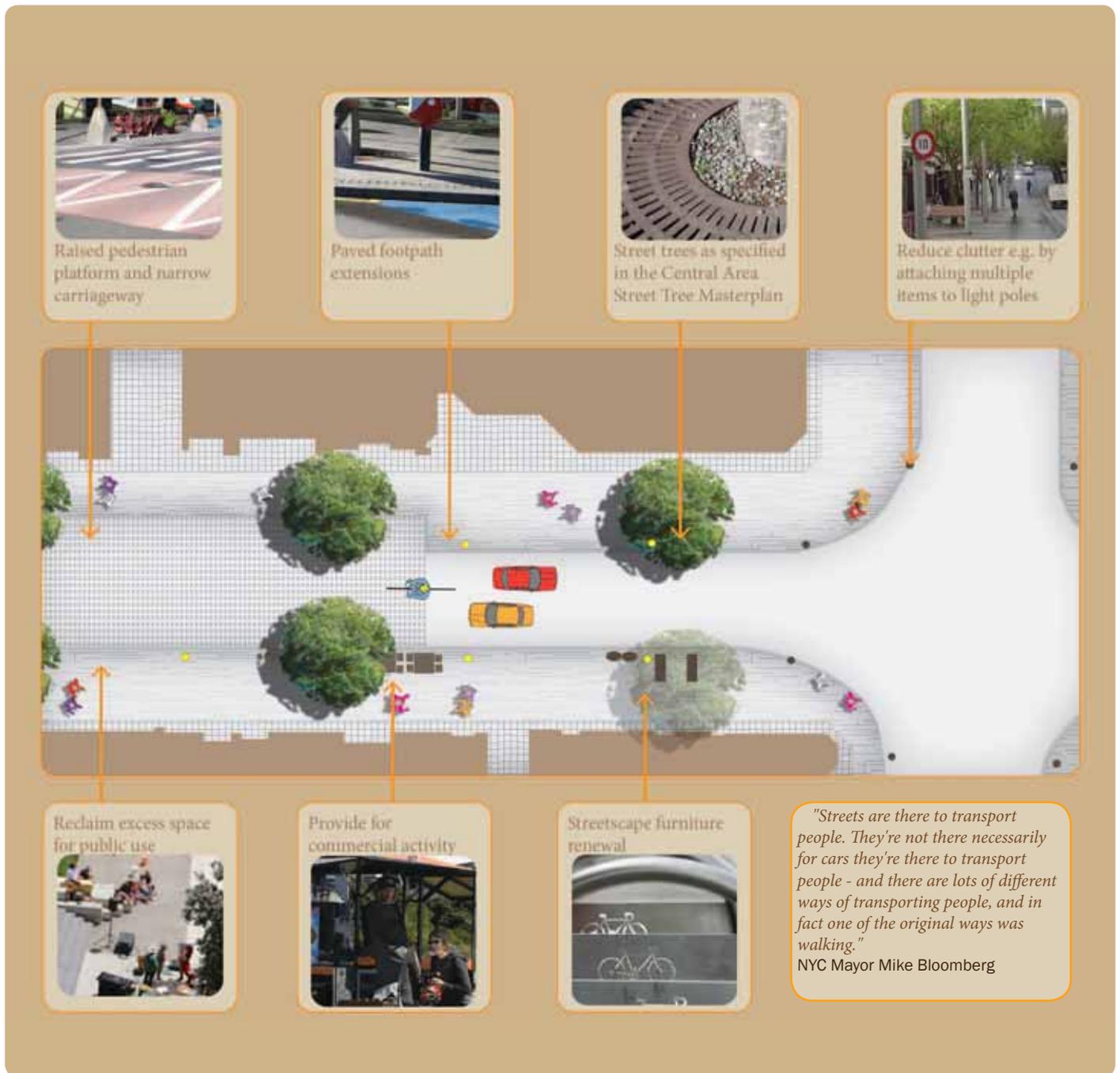
The intention is for incremental implementation within existing budgets so that when maintenance work or asset renewal is required it can contribute to the wider vision for the pedestrian precinct.



Pedestrian Precinct Priorities

- EXISTING TRAFFIC TAMED PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- HIGH PRIORITY FOR 'SLOW STREET' AMENITY UPGRADE
- LOW PRIORITY STREETS FOR AMENITY UPGRADE

Example of possible design features



Public Transport

There is opportunity to improve the infrastructure for the public transport system. Bus infrastructure needs to be convenient and dignified so more people will feel comfortable using the bus service. The Taranaki Regional Council operate the bus service and the New Plymouth District Council provide the infrastructure in the Central Area. The urban design framework is an appropriate avenue to provide strategic support for the bus service.

The long and narrow nature of the Central Area means a central location for the major bus stop can cause inconvenience for some potential bus passengers. The bus hub on Ariki Street is at one end of town and doesn't provide convenient access to some eastern parts of the Central Area. By paying attention to the Liardet Street bus stops and improving the amenity the bus hub location is supplemented.

Based on observations from the bus service operators the information and operation of the bus hub may require clarification and improved accessibility and amenity. The route maps need to be clearly displayed so that every one is able to read them. In addition, minor renovations of the bus hub are required in order to create a comfortable, safe and legible bus hub.

Ariki Street is indicated as a high priority street in the pedestrian precinct. This provides the opportunity to improve the safety and accessibility of pedestrians moving between bus stops along Ariki Street.



ABOVE: OLD NEW PLYMOUTH TROLLEY BUSES AT THE CUTFIELD DEPOT.

Streetscape Plan

The vision is for streets to provide safe access for all people; to be pleasant places to use that provide desirable connections between destinations and accommodate a wide range of activities.

On one hand the New Plymouth Central Area has some highly commended examples of streetscapes that were identified in the urban design survey such as Brougham and parts of Devon Street. But on the other hand there are some streets, such as Gill and Molesworth Streets, that were identified as peoples least favourite space in the Central Area. There is opportunity to greatly enhance the quality of some streets in the Central Area and to make them more inviting with better landscaping.

The Streetscape Plan will encapsulate the detail for the pedestrian precinct and it will address edge and intersection treatments for areas outside of the pedestrian precinct. It will aim to create streets for people and to promote activity to be accommodated on the Central Area streets.

The Streetscape Plan will address the need to develop a cohesive sense of place for the Central Area, and to reduce visual clutter where possible, through the rationalisation of street signs and other elements including private sandwich board advertising on the footpath.

There will be a technical section that specifies standard street elements to be used within the Central Area streets to reduce the variety that exists except for when a need to use a bespoke design is identified.

The implementation of the Streetscape Plan is incremental so that each project or asset renewal in the area will contribute to the long term vision for the Central Area.

"If we can develop and design streets so they are wonderful, fulfilling places to be, community- building places attractive for all people-

Then we will have successfully designed about one third of the city directly and will have had an immense impact on the rest"

Allan B. Jacobs

Allow Freedom of Movement Actions

Legend



New budget required



Existing/
requires alignment

Priorities	Action	Measure	New or Existing
<i>Pedestrian Precinct</i>	Investigate opportunities to creatively adapt streetscapes into attractive places for people within existing budgets.	<p><i>More lively streets with higher pedestrian volumes</i></p> <p><i>Recognisable slow speed zone with minimal need for law enforcement of speed limits</i></p>	 <p>Existing</p>
	Investigate opportunities to improve the pedestrian and cycle access over SH44 between the coast to the Central Area.	<p><i>Improved access between the coast and the Central Area</i></p> <p><i>Enhanced Central Area streetscape amenity</i></p>	 <p>NEW</p>
	Investigate design opportunities for high priority pedestrian precinct streets. Address in the Strengthen the Sense of Place action of creating a Central Area Masterplan.		
	Investigate design opportunities for Liardet street as the number one priority to connect Pukekura Park to the Coast, enhance access between the Coast and the Central Area and enhance amenity for the range of businesses and residences on the street.		
<i>Public Transport</i>	Improve the amenity of existing bus stops and the Bus Hub including shelter and seating.	<p><i>Increased patronage on the bus services</i></p> <p><i>Improved bus stop waiting environment</i></p>	 <p>NEW</p>
	Provide accessible accurate information to support the bus service.		
	Investigate opportunities to improve the operation and function of the Bus Hub.		
<i>Streetscape Plan</i>	Create a Central Area Streetscape Plan. Address in the Strengthen the Sense of Place action of creating a Central Area Masterplan.	<p><i>Improved streetscape amenity</i></p> <p><i>More efficient streetscape element maintenance and renewal system</i></p>	 <p>NEW</p>

Generate Lively Public Life

Achieving the Central Area vision includes fostering those elements that make the place into somewhere people care about: a place to unwind; everyone's place; an active, green and safe environment. These elements form the anchors of community life and facilitate broad and creative interaction.

The elements include public meeting places, open space, art galleries, public art, cafes, market places and events. Essential qualities of these elements include easy accessibility, free or inexpensive cost of participation, a welcoming atmosphere and comfortable environment.

The vital role that Puke Ariki and the landing play in the community was repeatedly recognised in the urban design survey. It was recognised for the good quality contemporary design, the landscaping, the location, the connection and easy accessibility from the Central Area and the coast, heritage and cultural heritage features and activities, the suitability as a gathering place for groups and the range of activities held there. It is a shared place with a wide range of uses.

Conversely, parts of the Central Area were identified as lacking these elements and were not highly favoured e.g. Gill Street, outside Centre City and Huatoki Plaza. Borrowing the best qualities of Puke Ariki and the landing and adapting to new environments to create more people friendly and active places will contribute to the vision for the Central Area.

Over recent years the Council has addressed the nighttime safety of the Central Area through various management policies. The urban design survey showed this work has been relatively successful: 60% agreed or strongly agreed the Central Area is a safe place to be while 27% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Promoting the Central Area as the Districts preeminent place of cultural activities and social interaction is a key area of focus for the Central Area vision.

Key Priorities

Public art

Art in public places are important civic features that contribute to a vibrant public environment. They represent community identities and reinforce the sense of place.

Cafe life

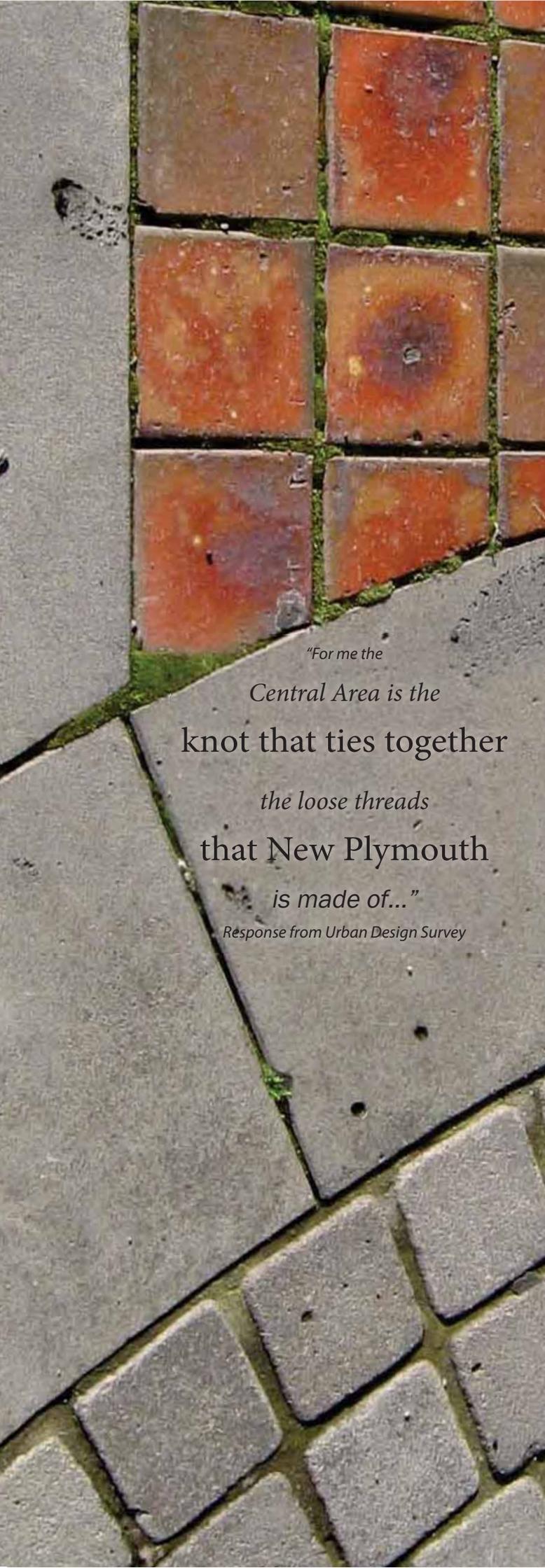
While cafes are private businesses the benefit to public life should not go unrecognised. There is mutual benefit in the Central Areas cafe culture: the increased stewardship of the Central Area as regulars form attachment to the place and the life and interest created through patrons occupying streetscape cafe seating. Fostering positive development in this area is a key priority to achieve the vision.

Events

Supporting and promoting events is part of the Councils existing programme activities. This work is a significant contribution to the vision to make the Central Area a vibrant efficient and attractive place to be.

Night time activities

The vision for the Central Area needs to be addressed at a range of scales, this includes activating the streets and spaces over longer periods of the day and contributing to the provision of a safe environment throughout the day and night.



*"For me the
Central Area is the
knot that ties together
the loose threads
that New Plymouth
is made of..."*

Response from Urban Design Survey

Public Art

Public art can become a focus point of discussion and evoke community debate about key issues in New Plymouth.

The collection of public art in the Central Area is growing and covers a range of different themes. There is room for much more. It is encouraging to see the talented contribution of local artists breathing life and interest into some of New Plymouth's greyer areas.

The New Plymouth District Art in Public Places Trust is tasked with implementing the district art in public places strategy. The Trust administers a fund and provides advice to support public art projects.

Supporting activity that contributes to the Central Areas growing public art stock is a priority to achieve the vision.

Cafe Life

The primary benefit of cafes in the Central Area is the contribution of activity and interest for people in the area. Seating outside of cafes is often associated with cafes in the Central Area. They work best when a pleasant and comfortable sitting environment can be provided and it is in a location where there is something to look at or be a part of when sitting outside.

There are many locations in the Central Area where good quality cafe seating is provided. The seating makes the most of the available sunlight and sheltered conditions and brings life into the streets.

It is encouraging to see the seating locations align with the streets where amenity upgrades have occurred which are also the same locations as where there is access to sunlight and more pedestrian traffic.

There are some examples of on street dining that are designed to protect customers from prevailing winds, however they are designed in such a way that the benefit to street life is compromised. Some arrangements can be dominant in the streetscape and interrupt the free flow of pedestrians.

To manage the risks of poorly designed on street cafe seating arrangements there is an on street dining policy. The guideline advises on appropriate parameters for cafe seating. Promotion of guideline compliance and increased awareness of the guideline provisions is a priority for achieving the Central Area vision.

Accommodating cafes in streetscape design to provide space for outdoor seating is another method to support the public life benefit of Cafes.

Events

The value and importance of events to the community and local economy should not be underestimated.

The Central Area is home to New Plymouth's most significant religious and cultural facilities and is some of the most iconic open spaces and event venues. It is the core of the Districts dining and entertainment industry. It hosts many of the Districts cultural and recreational activities. Peoples associations with the Central Area can be influenced by their experiences at these events.

Activating the Central Areas event spaces through out the day and year is an important measure of vibrancy and vitality.

The maintenance and enhancement of good quality event venues including open spaces is a significant contribution. Along with making strong connections to event venues outside of the Central Area such as to Pukekura Park and Yarrow Stadium. The core contribution of the Council is the potential to support and promote major events in the Central Area. More can be done to create a presence in Central Area of events that are already established e.g. have 1 or 2 Festival of Lights events in the Central Area each summer.

Design of open space so that it can have a range of uses including performance space is another method to support an enhanced event programme in the Central Area.

Night Time Activities

The night life for New Plymouth residents and visitors is an important feature of the Central Area. Places to socialise and meet after the shops have shut and work is over are critical to public life. The Council and other organisations support these activities by contributing to a safe public environment at night through a range of actions.

Ensuring there are safe night time networks for people to use is a key focus. Night time destinations should be connected to the main transport hubs such as the Brougham Street taxi stand with good quality pedestrian scale lighting, people on the street engaging in complementary activities and eyes on the street from nearby residents.

Promoting mixed use and increased residential development also contributes to a safer night time environment as it increases the amount of eyes on the street. It even raises the perception of safety through people seeing lights on in the second and third stories of buildings where residents live.

Buildings with appropriate noise attenuation features to accommodate residential use and night time activities is key to the mutual success of the two uses.



Generate Lively Public Life Actions

Legend



New budget required



Existing/
requires alignment

Priorities	Action	Measure	New or Existing
Public art	Support and promote more public art in the Central Area. Work with the Art in Public Spaces Strategy and Trust to deliver more public art.	Increased awareness and engagement with existing public art Increased public art in the Central Area	 Existing
	Investigate opportunities to enable and facilitate community involvement in public space and art installations.		
	Create walking tours and maps for Public Art.		
Cafe life	Enhanced streetscape environment that accommodates outdoor dining and barrier free pedestrian access along the footpath. Promotion and education of the On street dining policy.	Increased compliance with the guideline provisions Increased numbers of streetscape cafe seats	 Existing
	Accommodate the outdoor dining requirements of cafes within new streetscape projects.	Consult with adjacent business owners on requirements	
Events	Sponsor and promote Central Area events.	Increased participation at Central Area events	 NEW
	Investigate barriers to operating public events and look for opportunities to facilitate community activation of public space and streets. Investigate opportunities to incentivise Central Area events.	Increased number of Central Area events throughout the year	
	Maximise Central Area events through the Mainstreet Coordination action identified in the Foster a Viable Market section.		See Foster a Viable Market-Mainstreet Coordination
	Create and maintain good quality event venues including open spaces in the Central Area. Use flexible design principles to provide for multiple uses including event space.	Preservation and enhancement of Central area's facilities and open spaces' high amenity and desirability as major event venues	See Sense of Place Green Centre Actions for open space
	Build on strong connections from the Central Area and surrounding residential areas to major event venues.		See Freedom of Movement-Pedestrian Precinct
Night time activities	Contribute to a safe environment at night time.	Continuation of CCTV security camera programme in the Central Area	 Existing
		Providing information and advice on safe design in accordance with CPTED Guidelines in the development process	
		Support community organisations working to increase safety in the Central Area e.g. Maori wardens; Community patrol and Mellow Yellow network. Support continuation of under veranda lighting	

Foster a Viable Market

Underpinning all other areas of priority within the Urban Design Framework is the vision of the Central Area as a sustainable economic center for the District.

In 2011 there were 8777 businesses in the wider New Plymouth district; a slight decrease from the previous year but within expectations given the economic climate. These businesses employed 34460 people which is slightly up from the year before. Of these the New Plymouth Central Area Unit (defined to the right by Statistics NZ) has 1253 businesses and employs 10150, this means almost a third of all the district's employees are located in the Central Area Unit. The graphs show the trend of businesses and employee numbers for the New Plymouth and the Central Area Unit over 12 years.

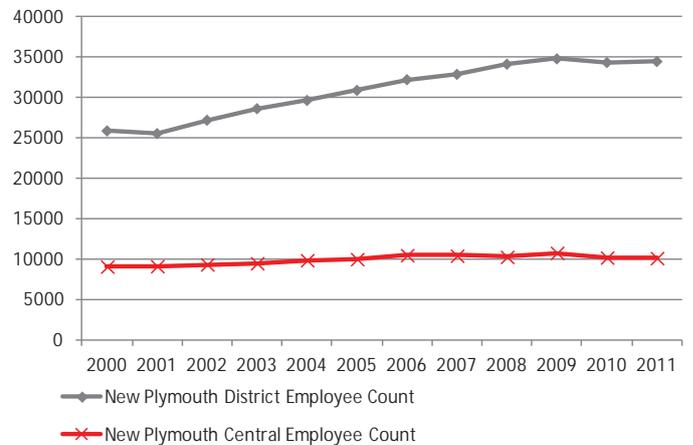
This information shows a relatively stable economic environment in the Central Area Unit though in comparison to the New Plymouth District growth in business and employee areas is slowing. It is vitally important to address this trend before it gains momentum.

Contributing to a viable market is the potential benefit of increasing the total number of residents in the Central Area. In 2006 the number of residents in the same area as businesses was 639. More residents would have a secondary positive effect on businesses. Through the increased residential market for businesses and the increased street activity which is self enforcing: people attract people.

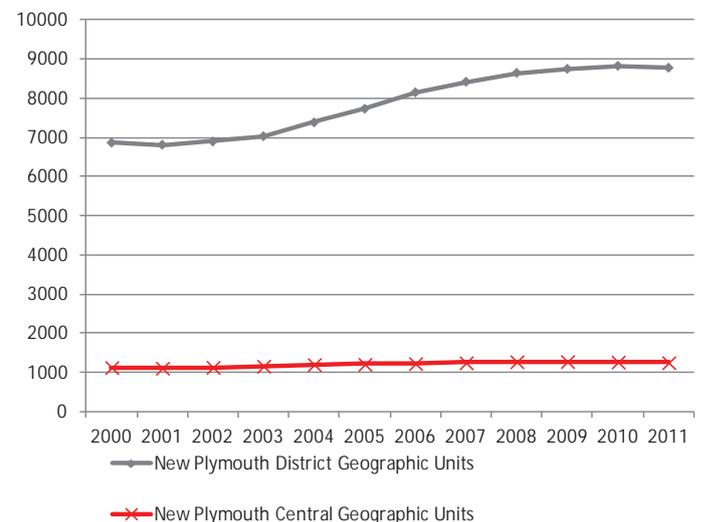
In order to encourage growth in the economic environment of the Central Area the following priorities have been identified.



New Plymouth Central Area Unit, Statistics NZ



New Plymouth District and Central Employee Numbers, Statistics NZ



New Plymouth District and Central Businesses Units, Statistics NZ

Key Priorities

Taking Care of Business and the Case Management Process

The Council has developed a process aimed at leading prospective business owners through the required legislation to address perceived barriers of local government processes.

Mainstreet Coordination

There is opportunity to strengthen the retail sector through establishing an association with a representative to champion retail issues.

Leveraging public investment

Based on the current economic climate and the communities preference for minimal rate increases options to achieve good design outcomes and maximum impact within existing budgets are a key focus for this framework. One of the available options is aimed at making the most of public capital investment through leveraging.

Taking Care of Business and the Case Management Process

In order to make it as easy as possible for people to set up a new business the Council has produced a written guide and set up a case management process. This is to help people navigate through the necessary rules and regulations to comply with before opening the doors to customers.

Case managers are assigned to people as a single point of contact and guide through the Council's processes. An initial meeting is set up with prospective business owners and a range of relevant specialists from across Council to identify legislative requirements and advise on pathways ahead.

Venture Taranaki

Venture Taranaki is Taranaki's Regional Development Agency, and works to grow the region's economic wealth. The Trust provides an extensive range of business services to help the district's businesses grow, whether that's at start-up, expansion and capability building, or exporting. It is also active in the areas of major events, visitor industry and regional marketing.

Mainstreet Coordination

During the urban design survey the formation of a mainstreet coordination programme for Central Area retailers was requested. This was identified as a mechanism to:

- Strengthen the influence of Central Area retailers in development and maintenance matters
- Improve the vibrancy and effectiveness of the Central Area and associated promotions.
- Increase consistency of opening hours, window display attractiveness, customer service levels and overall image of the area.



Leveraging public investment

Many leveraging opportunities are already taken up informally through existing activities. The chance to make the most of potential benefits can be formalised by requiring systematic consideration of private entities and the mutual benefits they receive through proposed projects and the potential associations that could be made through the project. There are a range of methods where leveraging can be used to contribute to the Central Area vision:

Incentives for good development

The potential incentives referred to in this document are intended to create the conditions necessary to realise the Central Area vision. For example Central Area residential development will support the local economy within the Central Area and in the long term will increase the local market for Central Area businesses.

Diversity- enabling a mix of uses

Promoting a combination of shops, residential development and office use in individual buildings is of benefit to the Central Area vision. The District Plan manages effects of activities rather than advocating for a desired outcome. So while the District Plan doesn't promote mixed use development; it is passive and has limited barriers when compared to more activity based plans in other districts.

There is opportunity to investigate provisions in the District Plan to have a more directive approach.

Advocacy

Providing advice to property owners and developers that aligns with the Central Area vision and encourages development to deliver community benefits such as affordable housing, publicly accessible parks and seating or environmental benefits such as low impact design solutions for stormwater.

An external design panel outlined in the Strengthen the Sense of Place theme provides the opportunity to make recommendations to development proposals.

Catalyst projects

Supply of Council infrastructure can have a catalyst effect on private investment unlocking regeneration projects e.g. the establishment of outdoor dining on Brougham Street after the street upgrade was completed. Actions such as creating a new public space in Central Area East or future Central Area infrastructure upgrades are likely to have a catalyst effect.

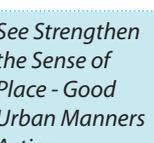
There is opportunity to expand on the effect by formally considering potential partnerships or agreements prior to development e.g. in some places public space is not built until private maintenance agreements can be made or a set amount of the boundary is guaranteed to be (re)developed (Mentz, 2012).



Foster a Viable Market Actions

Legend



Priorities	Action	Measure	New or Existing
<i>Foster business development</i>	Continue the Taking Care of Business and the Case Management Process	<i>An enhanced experience for prospective business owners and community organisations dealing with Council processes.</i>	 Existing
	Monitor Venture Taranaki	<i>Increased economic development in the Region.</i>	 Existing
	Investigate the implications of establishing a Mainstreet Co-ordination Programme	<i>Enhanced retail environment and Central Area vibrancy.</i>	 NEW
<i>Leveraging public investment</i>	Investigate barriers to development in the Central Area and develop specifically targeted incentives.	<i>Increased development in the Central Area.</i>	 NEW
	Mixed use development in the Central Area is encouraged.	<i>Increased mixed use development.</i>	 NEW
	Advice and guidance on good quality design for development in the Central Area	<i>Improved building quality in the Central Area.</i>	<i>See Strengthen the Sense of Place - Good Urban Manners Action</i>
	Advocacy through public presentations and meetings, exhibitions, marketing, design guidelines and other media.	<i>Raised awareness of Central Area development issues.</i>	 NEW
	Ensure maximum benefit is achieved with catalyst projects through formalising systematic consideration of potential opportunities.	<i>Private investment associated with public measurement is measured.</i>	 NEW



GUINNESS
GUINNESS
GUINNESS
GUINNESS

SOUTH
GAMING ROOM

Orange diamond-shaped sign on a white van

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Appendix 1: New Plymouth District Plan Relevant Building Height Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE 1 To ensure activities do not adversely affect the environmental and amenity values of areas within the district or adversely affect existing activities.

- Policy 1.1 Activities should be located in areas where their effects are compatible with the character of the area.

OBJECTIVE 5 To maintain and enhance the character and coherence of the urban areas of the New Plymouth District

- Policy 5.2 Buildings and structures should not detract from or reduce the visual amenity of the urban viewshafts

OBJECTIVE 7 To ensure the attractive, vibrant, safe, efficient and convenient character or the business environment is maintained.

- Policy 7.1 Buildings, signs and other structures should be designed and/or located to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on the character and visual amenity of business areas.
- Policy 7.2 Buildings and structures within business areas should be designed and/or located to ensure that areas of high pedestrian usage have access to daylight and sunlight and protection from the weather.

RELEVANT VIEW SHAFT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The extent to which the extra height of the proposed building will:

- adversely affect the character and visual amenity of the surrounding area;
- intrude into and/or block urban viewshafts;
- The extent to which site layout, separation distances, topography, planting or set backs can mitigate the adverse effects of extra height.
- The extent of intrusion of the additional height of the structure into the viewshaft, and the elements of the view affected
- The extent to which the core of the view is impinged upon by the additional height of the structure
- Whether the structure results in the removal of existing intrusions or increases the quality of the view
- Whether the additional height of the structure will frame the view
- The proximity of the structure to the inside edge of the viewshaft

RELEVANT BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AREA RULE 12 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

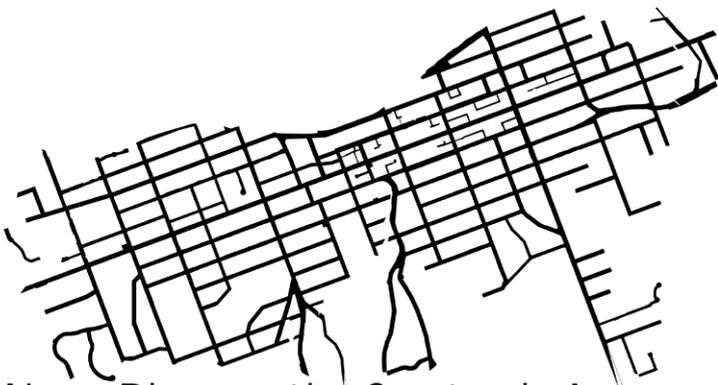
The extent to which the extra height of the proposed building will:

- adversely affect the character and visual amenity of the surrounding area;
- have an overbearing effect on sites within the residential environment area; and
- intrude into and/or block an urban viewshaft.

The extent to which site layout, separation distances, topography, planting or set backs can mitigate the adverse effect of extra height.

Disclaimer

There is no binding commitment on the New Plymouth District Council to proceed with any prospective project detailed in this document. Council spending priorities are reviewed frequently, including through the Council's Long Term Plan (LTP) process. All decisions as to whether or not a project will commence remain with the Council.



New Plymouth Central Area
Urban Design Framework