

Retail Centres for the 21st Century

Strategy: Retail Centres for the 21st Century

There are four key themes to the retail centres component of this strategy:

1. Grow and mature the Upper Hutt CBD into a vibrant city heart.
2. Consider opportunities in areas surrounding the Upper Hutt CBD for activities that complement and contribute to the vitality of the city centre.
3. Unlock the potential of our Suburban Shopping Centres to become vibrant urban villages serving their neighbourhoods.
4. Retain the existing provisions for local neighbourhood shops.

1. Grow the CBD into a Vibrant City Heart

The Hames Sharley study of the City Centre identifies how the location of key anchors influences the dynamics and movement of people and traffic around the CBD. Pedestrian movement between different anchors assists in sustaining activities located between the anchors. This in turn affects the vitality and vibrancy of different parts of the CBD. Public parking facilities occupy large areas of the CBD and their location also plays an important role in how different parts of the CBD function. An issue relating to the Upper Hutt CBD is that movement to and around it could be better directed/sign posted, whether it be access from State Highway 2, Fergusson Drive, connectivity from the rail/bus terminus, across the railway line, and the overall general legibility of the CBD. This strategy seeks to give effect to the objectives of the Hames Sharley study to increase the vibrancy and economic functioning of the CBD.

The Strategy provides for the expansion of the mix of activities within the CBD by reviewing District Plan provisions to encourage a greater range and choice of activities, including encouraging residential development of good urban design into the CBD e.g. two and three storey apartment buildings above ground level shops, higher density apartment buildings, and terrace and townhouse development on the edge of the CBD.

Encouraging a higher density of residential development into and surrounding the CBD will bring further activity and vibrancy into the City Centre and assist in making the CBD a safer environment – that is the CBD has activity day and night and becomes a place to live, work and play. A diverse range of activities, including higher density residential development, will broaden the central city's economic base and lessen reliance on any one particular sector. This will help to make the CBD more resilient throughout all phases of the economic cycle. It will also increase the choice of housing available in the City, and promotes the sustainable and efficient use of infrastructure, public transport,

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community facilities, and the existing buildings and physical resources of the CBD.

Council proposes to undertake Plan Changes to encourage an expanded mix and range of activities, including providing for a range of types of higher density residential development.

Encouragement of higher density residential development, and a greater mix of activities, will only be supported where the design of such developments is of a high standard that achieves good urban design outcomes, and is of a high level of amenity.

Council proposes to review District Plan provisions and other non-statutory methods to enhance the physical environment of the CBD.

Council proposes to become a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol. As a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol, Council will be committing to promoting improvements for good urban design outcomes in both public spaces and for developments of privately owned buildings.

The Urban Design Protocol identifies seven essential design qualities (commonly referred to as the seven C's) that together create quality urban design:

URBAN DESIGN PROTOCOL

Context	Seeing buildings, places and spaces as part of whole towns and cities
Character	Reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of our urban environment
Choice	Ensuring diversity and choice for people
Connections	Enhancing how different networks link together for people
Creativity	Encouraging innovative and imaginative solutions
Custodianship	Ensuring design is environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy
Collaboration	Communicating and sharing knowledge across sectors, professions and with communities

Growing the CBD into a vibrant City Heart can only succeed if the CBD builds upon its current attractive physical environment. This can be achieved by promoting an active and pleasant interface between public space and public and private buildings, achieving a high quality design and finish of individual buildings, by having a safe physical environment, by improving and encouraging connectivity with surrounding areas (both pedestrian and transportation), and by enhancing the legibility of the CBD e.g. improved signage, transportation linkages, and the like.

Accordingly, Council will review District Plan development standards in the CBD and introduce Plan Changes where necessary to address the following:

- **Car parking standards**

Council will review car parking standards, and in particular the parking requirements for residential activities in the CBD. This is necessary when promoting a diverse range of activities to ensure that there is a balance between meeting the functional needs of different developments and the efficient functioning of the CBD, versus providing onerous parking

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standards that discourage redevelopment and renewal in the CBD, or which are not effective and create conflict between the different users of the CBD.

- **Review development standards**

The development standards for the Business Commercial zone are blunt instruments that have a large influence on the physical location, bulk and scale of buildings. Yet it is the interaction of buildings with one another and with the public realm that influence the look and feel (the seven C's in the Urban Design Protocol), the attractiveness and vibrancy of the CBD, and which can also significantly affect the amenity of areas adjoining the CBD.

As an example, the existing bulk and location standards of the Business Commercial Zone provide for a maximum building height of 20m (6 stories) on the northern side of Main Street and 40m (13 stories) elsewhere in the CBD – even adjoining the Residential Zone. With the encouragement of higher density residential development into the CBD the review will consider appropriate building heights for the range of residential densities e.g. two storey (8m) townhouses/terraces adjoining existing residential development on the edge of the CBD (e.g. Savage Crescent, King Street), through to three or four storey apartments (retail at ground level and apartments above) elsewhere in the CBD through to high rise in the central core of the CBD.

The review will also give consideration to introducing new standards to improve the finished quality and design of individual buildings for their intended use (e.g balconies/ courts/ outlook for higher density residential development; connectivity between the private and public realm for new commercial developments), signage provisions and the like in order to achieve an attractive, vibrant, and safe City Centre that builds upon the existing good design aspects of the Upper Hutt CBD which is compact, has good connectivity, and has a built form of a human scale.

Council will incorporate appropriate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) criteria identified in the 'Upper Hutt Central Business Area Safety Assessment and Crime Prevention Plan' prepared in November 2005 by Stoks Ltd into the review of development standards in the District Plan, and other non-statutory methods implemented by Council.

CPTED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Legibility	The ability for users of public spaces to see and understand the physical environment in which they are moving
Visibility	The ability to be seen by others and enjoy the benefits of non-invasive passive supervision by other members of the public eg when sitting outdoors, walking past, shopping.
Lighting	Many aspects influence safety and security, including if there is lighting, the evenness and consistency of any lighting, blinding glare, and if there is suitable lighting for the activities being undertaken.
Entrapment Zones	Physically confining spaces formed by barriers such as walls, landscaping and the like which offenders can use to physically and psychologically surround and entrap people
Movement Predictors	Long, unchangeable thoroughfares with limited opportunities to exit.
Isolated Areas	Places where it would be very hard for a person in difficulty to summon assistance or attract the attention of passers-by or other people in the vicinity.
Sense of Ownership	Places which demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to and being cared for by someone are less likely to be targeted for crime.
Finding Help	The ability to find help when in a threatening situation.
Overall Quality of the Environment	The overall quality of the environment has a major bearing on both the perception and reality of safety and security.

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Council proposes to introduce a Plan Change to limit retailing as a Permitted Activity in the Business Industrial Zone. The location of retailing (other than showrooms and retailing ancillary to an industrial activity occurring on a site) in the Business Industrial Zone undermines the vibrancy and economic resilience of the CBD and suburban shopping centres, and potentially could deter on-going significant economic investment and renewal in the CBD. Alternative locations for 'Big Box Retailing' could undermine growing the critical mass of the CBD, and undermine the existing good compact form and concentration of business services in Upper Hutt. Such dispersal of retail activities in other business locations not within or adjoining the CBD will lead to reliance on increased private car trips and does not result in sustainable use of energy, existing infrastructure and physical resources.

The establishment of stand alone retail activities – in particular if 'Big Box Retailing' established in the Business Industrial Zone in locations elsewhere in the City such as Alexander Park (former GM site, Alexander Road), Whakatiki Street, and Montgomery Crescent - would compete with and undermine the function of the CBD and the Suburban Shopping Centres as the predominant locations for retail activities. Controlling the location and nature of retail activities in the Business Industrial Zone will assist in intensifying and concentrating retail and business activity in the City Centre and growing the Upper Hutt CBD into a vibrant City Heart.

Council will investigate opportunities where they arise, including non-statutory methods in partnership with stakeholders, to enhance the public spaces, physical environment, connectivity to and legibility of the CBD. These may include but are not limited to:

- Developing an Urban Design Guideline identifying and providing examples of good urban design principles to be promoted in new developments in the CBD.
- Improving directional signage to enhance the legibility of the CBD, e.g. by improving directional signage and street/pedestrian works to reinforce the identity of main connector routes to and from State Highway 2 and from the Upper Hutt Railway Station and bus

terminus, to the CBD, and to developments on the opposite side of the railway line e.g Orongomai Marae, Maidstone Max, Maidstone Park, and future development at Park Street and the South Pacific Tyres site. An example of this is Council's active partnership in upgrading and improving the safety of the pedestrian underpass from the CBD to Park Street.

- Improving directional signage to public car parking facilities and other significant activities or developments in the CBD.
- Developing and adopting a signage and numbering guideline with 'Experience Upper Hutt' to guide signage and advertising to present a unified and attractive identity for the City Centre.

Council will implement improvements to the physical environment of the city centre, in line with proposals prepared in 2005 by Athfield Architects and Wraight Associates Ltd, adopted as part of the LTCCP. These include significant landscaping, planting, lighting and street furniture upgrades; significant improvements to define Gibbons Street as the main entrance from State Highway 2; and street sculptures.

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2. Further Develop the Area Surrounding the CBD

For the city centre to function well, it is also important to consider what is happening on the CBD periphery as these areas are also important in complementing and contributing to city centre vitality.

One of the most significant new opportunities for the city is the potential to redevelop that part of the South Pacific Tyres site which has become surplus to their requirements when manufacturing from the site stopped at the end of 2006.

The South Pacific Tyres site has a substantial area of 22 ha, of which approximately half is flat. It presents an opportunity to provide sufficient land to accommodate 'Big Box Retailing' and other large buildings together with the ability to accommodate the necessary off-street car parking in a manner which will have a synergy and complementary function with the CBD and Maidstone Park as a premier destination for commercial and recreational activity.

Consideration will also be given to whether District Plan provisions or other initiatives could assist in linking city centre activities with properties and development on the southern side of the railway, i.e. expand the city centre across to the activities on the other side of the railway.

Council proposes to introduce a plan change to rezone the South Pacific Tyres site and land within the extended CBD from Business Industrial to a new zone, Business CBD, to provide for big box retailing and complement the functioning of the City Centre. The existing CBD does not have sufficient land available to be developed for 'Big Box Retailing'. The siting of 'Big Box Retailing' in locations away from the City Centre has potential to rival and compete with the CBD as an alternative town centre, thereby undermining the vitality and long term goal of growing the Upper Hutt CBD into a vibrant City Heart.

The plan change would also provide for other appropriate commercial and service uses such as indoor recreation facilities which complement

the adjoining recreation precinct at Maidstone Park, and would also look to align the height standards for this site with those of the CBD.

Within this new extended Business CBD zone, residential development would be provided for as a Discretionary Activity and ancillary to any business use of the site.

Council will also investigate opportunities in areas on the edge of and adjoining the existing Upper Hutt CBD to be rezoned to accommodate medium to higher density residential development. These areas have easy access to all of the services available in the CBD and would contribute to the vibrancy and economic activity in the CBD. The proposal would also increase the availability of a range and choice of housing with good access to services, including public transport, and would reinforce a compact and sustainable urban form.



Proposed Extension of the CBD to the South of the Railway

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3. Foster the Development of Urban Villages

Council will foster the development of a number of existing urban villages along the length of the valley.

The suburban shopping centres at Silverstream Village, Camp Street – Trentham, Totara Park, and Brown Owl, are existing centres that are, or have the potential to become, hubs for the local neighbourhood accommodating a mix of local shops, bars, cafés and restaurants, and a range of shops and businesses. All are within close proximity to public transport routes – either rail or bus.

Intensification at these nodes will reinforce Upper Hutt's compact corridor form, result in the efficient use of infrastructure and services, and enhance the ability for people to obtain goods and services locally thereby reducing energy consumption and resulting in the sustainable use of existing resources.

Council will undertake plan change(s) to encourage an expanded mix and range of activities, in particular business and service activities that serve the day to day needs of the neighbourhood. Council will also look at ways of encouraging higher density residential development within the identified suburban shopping centres, and comprehensive residential developments in core areas surrounding the suburban shopping centres. The detail of these changes will be worked through with each community prior to the notification of any plan change, to ensure that the scale of potential development is appropriate and the unique character and amenity of each area is promoted.

Urban Design Guidelines will be proposed which identify and provide examples of good urban design principles that work well to create this type of vibrant urban village.

District Plan Changes for large new greenfield sites are to incorporate Structure or Concept Plans. The Structure or Concept Plans should

identify provision for local shops in greenfield areas which are not accessible to existing neighbourhood shops.

4. Retain Local Neighbourhood Shops

The small local neighbourhood shops serve an important function of providing day to day goods and services to the immediate locality and are also locations where small scale businesses can establish premises. The fact that these premises have survived the significant changes over the decades to the changing retail sector and changes to transport shows that there is a continued role for these premises to adapt to future service needs of the City.

Council will therefore retain the existing District Plan provisions for these premises.

Riverstone Terraces is a new suburb that is not serviced by any local neighbourhood shops. The strategy encourages development of neighbourhood shopping in this location.

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Implementation Summary

Development of retail centre for Riverstone Terraces

Private Developer /UHCC

Low

ACTION	AGENCY	PRIORITY
Fostering and development of urban villages	UHCC	Ongoing
Crime Prevention through Environmental Design	UHCC	Ongoing
Improvement of directional signage and legibility of the CBD	UHCC	Ongoing
Retain existing provisions for neighbourhood shopping centres	UHCC	N/A
Control of retailing in the Business Industrial Sub-zone	UHCC	Critical
Become a signatory to the NZ Urban Design Protocol	UHCC	High
Review of District Plan development standards for both retail and business development including car parking, bulk and location and signage	UHCC	Medium
Extension of Central Business District to encompass the former South Pacific Tyres Site	UHCC	Medium
Development of Design Guidelines for CBD Development	UHCC	Medium
Review of CBD District Plan development standards	UHCC	Medium
Expansion of the mix and range of activities provided for by the District Plan in the CBD	UHCC	Medium
Provision for higher density residential development within and surrounding the CBD	UHCC	Medium