Sense of Place

Urban Design, Amenity, Local Character and Heritage
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report looks at the relationship between sense of place, urban design, local character and historic and cultural heritage. It discussed how urban design will contribute towards achieving an urban environment that complements our unique natural setting and acts as an enticement for people to visit, work and live here for the coming 30-50 years. The report summarises the results from previous research reports and aligns with Government’s Urban Design Protocol.

The information, together with information provided in other reports, will assist in formulating the Whangarei District Council Sub-Regional Growth Strategy – Sustainable Futures 30/50. Development of the district must, if it is to contribute to making Whangarei and its urban environments attractive, desirable places to visit, live and work, be informed by good urban design, the principles of new urbanism, and build upon existing heritage, local character and sense of place.

The report provides an overview of the Sustainable Futures 30/50 five tier settlement pattern. It summarises Council’s previous research and existing published information, such as Whangarei 20/20 Plus – CBD Guideline Development, Urban Growth Strategy, the Marsden Point/Ruakaka Structure Plan and Coastal Management Structure Plans.

The report found that the current development of Whangarei City centre is hampered by a number of classic urban planning issues. However, there is still tremendous opportunity to link the city to nearby landscape attractions, develop key facilities in town and broadly evolve Whangarei as a national attraction for business and visitors.

The five urban villages, Kamo, Tikipunga, Onerahi, Maunu and Otaika, provide a mixed use of residential, commercial with limited light industrial development. These include retailing activities, small to medium scale business services, supermarkets, gas stations, residential, and community and recreation activities for the local community. Suburban centres give the local area and community much of its distinctive identity, and a focus for local community events and transport connections, thereby enhancing and maintaining the character and amenity of the area.

The Marsden Point/Ruakaka area is likely to functionally change from its historical role as mainly rural with isolated industries, to a functionally much broader-based urban area, with significant businesses, residential, community and civic activities. Planning and urban design principles are essential to the visioning and implementation of such development. These will guide the delivery of a visually appealing, comfortable and secure physical environment that will, in turn, create economic confidence in a place leading to long term investment within the community.

Rural and coastal growth nodes are identified at Hikurangi, Waipu Township and Parua Bay. These areas are rich in a distinctive range of historic heritage relating to the history and development of the towns. Their heritage features, natural character and other attractions are what make these places unique. These areas
have the potential to be an ‘attractor’ for visitors and eco-tourists. Heritage values have contributed to the community’s sense of place significantly. It is important to maintain and enhance the diversity of values and special character that contribute to the unique sense of place for communities in these three growth nodes.

Two rural villages at Maungakaramea and Maungatapere are both facing numerous future growth development issues. Given there is no structure plan prepared for these two villages, it is important to manage local urban growth issues before the negative effects of unplanned growth cannot be avoided or mitigated. Structure plan are needed to assist in this.

In terms of sense of place in the eight coastal villages identified, it is necessary to recognise the distinct features that make an area attractive to the local community and wider public. Recognising and providing for those features and values that contribute to sense of place will be an important component ensuring that both structure plans and the Sustainable Futures 30/50 Sub-regional Growth Strategy provide a successful vision for the future of these areas.

The report shows that sense of place is an important, multifaceted concept that attracts, retains and enriches communities in relation to a particular locality. A number of aspects contribute to a sense of place and can be improved to enhance that sense of place. These include historic and cultural heritage, local character and amenity, neighbourhood identity, and urban design.

Good urban design adds value by increasing the economic viability of development and by delivering social and environmental benefits. Good urban design can help generate a sense of place for the district and make it more of a destination, rather than a place to pass through. Developing a strong sense of place, through good urban design incorporating those values both natural and historic/cultural that presently exist, will enhance the district and its varied settlements (from Whangarei City to coastal villages) as a place to live, work and play.

A sense of place serves to attract visitors and tourists thereby contributing in economic terms to employment and social development. A strong sense of place contributes to economic wellbeing, and economic prosperity contributes in turn to a positive sense of place. Both contribute to the sustainable development of the district over the long term.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Town planning seeks to achieve good quality development. Urban design is about relationships, the character of buildings and spaces and how people perceive and use both. Increasing interest is being shown, at national and local levels, in the three-dimensional quality of new development and the role and contribution of urban design.

Good urban design is central to achieving sustainable development, facilitating growth of urban areas that interact positively with their local environment. Ministry for the Environment research shows that good urban design brings both tangible and intangible benefits in economic, environmental, social and cultural aspects. The following are some of the benefits urban design might offer in the New Zealand context as concluded in *The Value of Urban Design* (Ministry for the Environment, 2005):

- Good urban design can offer significant benefits to the community; conversely, poor design can have significant adverse effects on the urban environment, society and economy.
- While good urban design sometimes costs more upfront, this is not necessarily the case; moreover, long-term costs can be avoided.
- Communities value the better quality of life that good urban design can deliver.
- Urban design can affect people’s ability and willingness to undertake physical exercise: good design can offer health benefits.
- Urban design can help make towns and cities safer and more secure.
- Urban design elements are interconnected: urban design is most effective when a number of elements come together (e.g. mixed use, density and connectivity).

Good urban design can create a sense of place where there was none, and will build on the assets of an inherently well-located site. Mixed use, higher density, walkable neighbourhoods encourage local services and community interaction, making safer, healthier, more attractive places to visit, live, stay and work.

In contrast, poor urban design can impose significance cost on their occupier, neighbourhoods, and on society and result in conflict between user. These include undermining amenity, physical disconnection, poor public transport connections, making it hard for the less mobile to get about, making it difficult to recruit and retain skilled workers. Bad urban design is not about demolishing and replacing poorly designed buildings and places. It can have significant costs for both residents and local authorities in terms of higher levels of public services being required to tackle poor housing, high crime, vandalism, poor health, loss of production soils, and loss of cultural and historic sites of significance. Overall, poorly designed places and unplanned growth are likely to incur higher costs to individuals and society in the long run.

Whangarei is the regional centre for Northland, a growing region which has an extensive coastline. It has a broadening economic base and benefits from being relatively close to New Zealand’s largest city Auckland. The district has experienced significant growth over the period of 2001 to 2008. Although growth is slowing in line with global and national trends, future growth for the district is projected to continue and in some
parts of the district, particularly in the Marsden Point/Ruakaka area, has the potential to be substantial. This growth presents both challenges and opportunities to our communities, businesses and governing bodies, and to us as individuals and families.

To orientate the direction of the growth of Whangarei District for the coming 30-50 years, this study sets out how urban design will contribute towards achieving attractive urban environments that complement our unique natural setting and act as an enticement for people to visit, work and live here.

1.2 Structure of the Report

This study will summarise the result from previous research reports and aligns with Government’s Urban Design Protocol based on a physical design approach. This study is seen as a link between:

- The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol
- The vision for the district contained within the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP)
- Whangarei 20/20 Plus
- Whangarei Urban Growth Strategy
- The Whangarei District Plan

The reminder of this report is set out as follows:

Chapter 2 discusses the concept of urban design and new urbanism. General aspects, principles, key concepts, the importance of urban design, new urbanism approaches in New Zealand and a brief interpretation of the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (the Protocol) principles will be discussed.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of four key urban design concepts, which are mixed use, heritage, sense of place and local character. This chapter provides an understanding of the major historic themes which have shaped Whangarei District and describes the important linkage between heritage, character and urban design planning. It looks at the term ‘amenity’ and the importance of preserving and enhancing local character for success in attracting visitors, residents and investment. It also discusses ways in which the district can find its niche through marketing unique assets and uncover the benefits that come from maintaining local distinctiveness and place identity.

Chapters 5 to 9 provide an overview of the Sustainable Futures 30/50’s five tier settlement pattern. It summaries Council’s previous research on Whangarei 20/20 Plus – CBD Guideline Development, Urban Growth Strategy and Coastal Management Structure Plans.

The report concludes with a series of findings and recommendations in Chapter 10.
1.3 Limitations of the Study
In the discussions on ‘New Urbanism’ and ‘Urban Design’, this report does not cover every aspect of New Urbanism and urban design literature due to its broad context and multi-disciplinary field. The focus has been selective, addressing the main issues of interest related to Whangarei District. The discussion in this report has been centred mainly on environmental and social sustainability. Cultural and economic sustainably are the subject of separate reports but are acknowledged as being intimately related to urban design, amenity, local character and sense of place. However, a number of issues omitted could merit further investigation.

1.4 Methodology
The intent of the report is to provide useful background information on urban design and inform the public on how urban design can contribute to improving the district’s urban structure, form and the experience of living and working in the Whangarei District. The information, together with information provided in other reports, will assist in formulating the Whangarei District Council Sub-Regional Growth Strategy – Sustainable Futures 30/50. Development of the district over the next 30 to 50 years must, if it is to contribute to making Whangarei and its urban environments attractive, desirable places to visit, live and work, be informed by good urban design, the principles of new urbanism, and build upon existing heritage, local character and sense of place.

This report has been prepared using existing published information and research reports provided predominantly by Whangarei District Council (WDC) and Ministry for the Environment (MFE). No specific consultation has been undertaken as part of this report preparation.
2. NEW URBANISM AND URBAN DESIGN

2.1 What is Urban Design?

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (the Protocol) states that:

“Urban design is concerned with the design of the buildings, places, spaces and networks that make up our towns and cities, and the ways people use them. It ranges in scale from a metropolitan region, city or town down to a street, public space or even a single building. Urban design is concerned with not just the appearances and built form but with the environmental, economic, social and cultural consequences of design. It is an approach that draws together many different sectors and professions, and it includes both the process of decision-making as well as the outcomes of design.” (Ministry for the Environment, 2005, p. 7).

Urban design is the practice of shaping human settlements – to create practical, comfortable and pleasant places for people to live and go about their daily lives. It is also about making well planned, logical connections between people, spaces and buildings. It focuses on the physical improvement of the public environment rather than focusing on the management of development through planning schemes and other statutory development controls.

2.2 Why Does Urban Design Matter?

Good design plays a vital role in securing places that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. The Australian Prime Minister’s Urban Design Taskforce, emphasises the benefits of good urban design. It concludes that:

"The quality of urban design matters. It does so in terms of experience and meaning because of the messages and feelings different places provide us with: functionally, for the efficient and effective working of the city; socially, as a means of building equitably supportive towns and cities; and for the way it can strengthen economic life and competitiveness. Urban design gives us the tools with which we can consciously improve the quality of cities and regions." (Australian Prime Minister’s Urban Design Taskforce, 1994, p. 7).

These social, economic and environmental transformations mentioned above contributed to the rise of urban design in the fields of planning, architecture, and (to a lesser extent) landscape architecture. Its growing prominence reflects a general recognition that human environments are inherently complex and diverse and the consequent need for design interventions to acknowledge local social, historical and environmental contexts. Urban design is ultimately a strategic way of meeting the challenges of ‘sustainable development’. With its emphasis on rebuilding settlements to make them better, it aims to operationalise strategies for balancing ecology, economy, and the social realm through compactness, mixed land use, greater connectivity and safeguarding of environmentally sensitive areas. Urban design is vital in the 21st century as it plays an essential part in the development of a cohesive, inclusive, safe, healthy and vibrant city with opportunity for all and the power to attract people.
New Zealand is a relatively urbanised country with more than 85% of its population living in urban/suburban environments (Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 1998). Each of our urban areas is to some extent unique but they all have been shaped by a mixture of geographic, economic and demographic forces.

Whangarei is the major urban and industrial centre for the Northland Region. The urban area and the immediate surrounds provide a range of lifestyle options for residents. However, the way in which a district or city grows, can have a significance impact on its environment, the quality of life for its residents and the economic well-being of business. The recent years of continued urban growth in the district has brought with it concerns about the impact that intensification of development has upon physical resources such as housing, and the impact that development at the periphery will have on natural resources such as coastal environments.

All too often new development lacks identity and a sense of place. Basic good urban design practice is not being met. In these cases, it lets down communities and users, and undermines the aims of the sustainable places agenda. In addition, previous non-strategic planning practice has also caused loss of focus on Whangarei’s CBD and town centres which has resulted in a loss of ‘sense of place’ and community character and identity. Therefore, urban design is a key factor in creating and maintaining the ‘sense of place’, liveability and viability of urban neighbourhoods.

Some of the key challenges and how the practice of urban design can respond in Whangarei’s planning context are described below.

### 2.2.1 Natural and Historical Environments

A distinctive feature of the Whangarei District is its long and varied coast. The coastline is made up of rugged cliffs and rocky headlands, mangrove-lined harbours and estuaries, sandy beaches and sheltered bays. The coastal environment is rich in both cultural and natural heritage features. It was extensively settled by early Maori and contains many archaeological sites. Over the years, the coast has been substantially modified, with coastal forests, dune vegetation and indigenous wetlands being largely replaced by farmland. A significant proportion of the district’s population live in or near the coastal environment, and there are a large number of coastal settlements of varying size along the coastline.

As well as natural resources, Whangarei has a wealth of heritage that helps to define the identity of the district, providing residents and communities with a distinct sense of place. However, the district is facing threats to historic heritage in those areas subject to development pressure, i.e. along the coast in the Marsden Point/Ruakaka area, and around the urban fringe and in the rural area, particularly in areas such as Maunu/Maungatapere, Three Mile Bush, Glenbervie, Maungakaramea, Whaitiri and Ruatangata. The main risks are to stone walls on the urban fringe and to archaeological sites and sites of significance to Maori along the coast and in the Marsden Point/Ruakaka area.
Urban design has a key role to play in helping to ensure that use and development of the coast (including coastal settlements), around the urban fringe and in the rural area, does not exceed the capacity of the environment to absorb the adverse effects of such activities. The way the building is located within the natural landscape and built environment; and how development responds better to our natural and historic environment are issues that can be addressed through the implementation of good urban design principles and policies.

2.2.2 Social Equity
Rising land and house prices is a concern facing most cities in New Zealand and the ability to maintain affordable and high quality places to live is an important issue. The recent Demographic Study\(^1\) has found that house prices for freehold residential houses in Whangarei District have experienced high increases, averaging 19% per year since 1992. The average house price has nearly quadrupled in value, increased from $92,479 in 1992 to $366,795 in 2008.

Urban design has a key role to play in improving social equity through creating higher density, mixed use neighbourhoods that use land more efficiently. This includes providing a variety of house types and tenures. Urban design can also address social inequity issues by providing better connections between buildings and blocks, encouraging alternative transport modes, such as walking and cycling, and improving access for those who do not have a motor vehicle.

2.2.3 Population Structure
The Demographic Study has found that the proportions of younger age groups, in particular 15-24 years and 25-44 years, are projected to steadily decrease in the Whangarei District. The district is facing challenges to attract and retain young, professional skilled workers.

Well designed buildings, public spaces, attractive and vibrant environments work together to make places look and feel good to those using them. Therefore, urban design has a key role to play in attracting mobile skilled workers, and consequently contributing economic success for the district.

2.2.4 Car Dominance
The Demographic Study has also pointed out that access to motor vehicles in the Whangarei District is relatively high, compared with the rest of New Zealand. One reason for this could be the low use of public transport. Around 0.5% of people use public transport to travel to work, compared with 4.8% for New Zealand as a whole. On the other hand, 70% of Whangarei residents drive to work, compared with 71% for Northland and New Zealand as a whole. The current low density urban form of the city and district, with land uses separated and spread out which makes it difficult to provide efficient public transport. This can lead to congestion with its associated social and economic costs, together with the environmental and health impacts of pollution.

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\(^1\) Demographic Profile of the Whangarei District. (Whangarei District Council, 2009).
Urban design has a key role to play by helping to create higher quality environments that support public transport and alternative transport modes. A more compact urban form where land uses and destinations are closer together will reduce the need to travel and can create environments where walking is considered a more attractive option. Good urban design can ensure that intensification can be achieved without loss of amenity and can increase variety and choice along with improved public space.

2.2.5 Rising Energy Costs
The location and form in which urban development occurs in the district will also affect how efficiently services can be provided and amounts of energy consumed. Inefficient design in terms of lay-out and density can lead to an environment that is less sustainable in physical and social terms.

Urban design has a role to play by providing a more compact urban form that helps reduce our energy consumptions and helps to prepare for any significant changes in energy costs. This includes:

- Reducing the use of private cars and the need to travel by providing integrated land use activity and transport networks;
- Reducing vehicle usage by providing accessible and convenient suburban centres for local residents;
- Advocating for the use of more renewable energy resources; and, slow the depletion of non-renewable energy resources by applying energy efficiency and conservation measures by domestic, commercial and industrial activities; and,
- Advocating for more energy efficient buildings.

2.2.5 Crime and Safety
In November 2005 the Crime Prevention Unit\(^2\) (CPU) released the National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (the Guidelines). The Guidelines recognise that one of the most effective methods of reducing crime in public places is to change the physical environment in which crime occurs (situational crime prevention). Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a crime prevention philosophy based on proper design and effective use of the built environment leading to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime. CPTED reduces criminal opportunity and fosters positive social interaction among legitimate users of public places (Ministry of Justice, 2005). Its approaches include improved human surveillance, improved sightlines, access control and space management.

Good urban design alone cannot be expected to solve crime. However, urban design has a key role to play in helping to reduce the likelihood of crime and deliver numerous social and economic benefits in the long-term. Places that are safe and feel safe are vibrant – they attract people, activity and positive social interaction. Popular places are also better for business, with high pedestrian counts reflected in higher turnover, employment, profit and investment. There is a growing number of crime prevention practitioners incorporated CPTED principles into their broader crime prevention planning work, for example:

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\(^2\) The Crime Prevention Unit leads the development of evidence-based policies and programmes aimed at preventing crime and reducing offending. The CPU works in partnership with communities, government agencies, iwi, Pacific peoples and service providers. The CPU implements projects in a wide range of communities throughout New Zealand.
• Safer Auckland City and the New Zealand Police undertook a risk assessment when developing the Britomart Transport Centre;
• Housing NZ Corporation has included CPTED principles in the development of some housing complexes; and
• Some territorial authorities are undertaking CPTED assessment and building CPTED principles into their District Plan and/or working practices (Ministry of Justice, 2009).

2.3 Urban Design Elements

The Value of Urban Design identifies eight core elements of urban design. These elements guide physical development toward a desired image that is consistent with the social, economic and aesthetic values of the city. They are summarised below.

Local Character
Definition: the distinctive identity of a particular place that results from the interaction of many factors, including built form, people, activity and history.

Urban design that respects and supports local character can:
• Attract highly skilled workers and high-tech businesses
• Help in the promotion and ‘branding’ of cities and regions
• Potentially add a premium to the value of housing
• Reinforce a sense of identity among residents, and encourage them to help actively managed their neighbourhood.

Connectivity
Definition: the physical conditions facilitating access within a region, city, town or neighbourhood.

Well-connected cities, towns and neighbourhoods can:
• Enhance land values
• Make local service shops and facilities more viable
• Enhance people’s safety and security by encouraging surveillance
• Reduce vehicle emissions through fewer cars being used for non-work trips.

Density
Definition: the concentration of population and activity in an urban area.

Urban design that promotes a higher density of buildings and public spaces (in conjunction with other conditions, such as mixed use, good building design and adequate open space) can:
• Deliver savings on land, infrastructure and energy
• Reduce the economic costs associated with time spent travelling
• Help concentrate knowledge and innovative activity in the core of the city
• Promote social connectedness and vitality
• Help encourage greater physical activity, with consequent health benefits
• Help conserve green spaces, in conjunction with certain kinds of urban development
• Reduce run-off from vehicles to water, and overall emissions to air/atmosphere.

**Mixed Use**
Definition: where a variety of different living and working activities are in close proximity within a neighbourhood.
Urban design that supports mixed-use neighbourhood (in conjunction with other factors including connectivity and a relatively high intensity of different uses) can:
• Offer people convenience, choices and opportunities, which lead to a sense of personal wellbeing
• Allow parking and transport infrastructure to be used more efficiently
• Lower household spending on transport
• Increase the viability of local shops and facilities
• Encourage walking and cycling – bringing health benefits, reducing the need to own a car and thus reducing emissions
• Increase personal safety
• Enhance social equity.

**Adaptability**
Definition: the capacity of urban buildings, neighbourhoods and spaces to adapt to changing needs.
Urban design that addresses adaptability can:
• Extend the useful economic life of buildings and public spaces
• Increase the diversity of uses and users in a public space, and the length of time it is used for
• Encourage the conservation of non-renewable resources
• Contribute to economic success over time.

**High Quality Public Realm**
Definition: all parts of the physical environment of towns and cities that the public has access to, and that form the setting for community and public life. Urban design that ensures high quality public places can:
• Lead to enhanced urban economic performance by attracting more people and activities
• Encourage greater participation in community and cultural activities, and enhance civic pride and commitment to the community
• Increase the use of public space and support associated business
• Enhance personal safety.

**Integrated Decision Making**
Definition: integration between and within organisations involved in urban policy, planning and implementation, as well as integration of the different urban design elements.
An integrated approach to decision making can:
• Increase opportunities for greater numbers of people to benefit from good urban design
• Allow urban design to produce the greatest possible benefits by working with complementary economic, social and environmental policies.

User Participation
Definition: the public consultation process, and other forms of involvement in urban design projects, such as surveys or design workshops.

User participation in urban design activity can:
• Improve the fit between design and user needs
• Allow more effective use of resources, by providing informed direction for decision making
• Offer time or cost saving during the decision making process, by encouraging increased user support for positive change
• Develop a greater sense of 'use ownership' over changes, and legitimise user interests
• Enhance a sense of community and local democracy.

2.4 What is New Urbanism?
New urbanism is an urban design movement originating in America social context that claims its objective as celebrating local history, climate, ecology, and building practice (Wikipedia, 2009). It is characterised as a neo-traditional planning system, the goals of which are to address the environmental issues associated with urban sprawl, demands for new infrastructure, increased traffic flows, inefficient energy use, and the development of rural areas with significant natural values (Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 1996, p. A9). New Urbanism is based on principles of planning and architecture that work together to create human scale, walkable communities (New Urban News, 2009).

New Urbanism defines urbanism by its diversity, pedestrian scale, public space and structure. The goal of the Congress of Urbanism (CNU), founded in 1993, is to "create buildings, neighbourhoods, and regions that provide a high quality of life for all residents, while protecting the natural environment" (CNU). The essence of urbanism design theory is the creation of a sense of community (Talen, 1998, p.2).

2.5 The Principles of New Urbanism
The three key principles of New Urbanism are:
1. Increased housing density: one dwelling per 300m$^2$ with a mix of detached, semidetached and terrace housing and apartments:
2. Public open space: the creation and enhancement of parks, squares, and public space for people to gather and interact; and

New Urbanism planning must be implemented at the following three levels:
1. The metropolis, the city and town;
2. The neighbourhood, the district and the corridor;
3. The street, the block and the building.

Features of New Urbanism include:

- Provide mixed-use buildings and allow mixed-use developments with housing, shopping, entertainment and other land uses;
- Planting of trees – to act as buffers, both physical and psychological, between walkers and traffic;
- Design incorporates the needs of pedestrians and public transport users;
- Interconnected street networks distribute traffic evenly and make walking easy;
- Promote alternative transport options (e.g. walking and cycling), support and enhance the use of public transport;
- Creation of open spaces, parks, plazas and squares – to encourage community harmony by offering places where people of different classes meet on equal footing;
- Preserve natural features for public to enhance a neighbourhood’s sense of identity and provide more gathering places;
- Convenience store, where people can walk to for a carton of milk, to have a chat with the owner, to catch up on the talk of the town; and,
- Town centres are promoted as geographical reference points and as a focus of civic life (National Geographic, 2009).

2.6 New Urbanism and Urban Design in New Zealand

There are many initiatives and developments around the world that follow New Urbanism principles to a greater or lesser extent. Good urbanism might be described in contemporary terms as sustainable urban living and working, provided through quality of place and service issues: design quality in both public and private sector construction and in the provision of facilities; the effective management and high quality maintenance of the public domain, streets and public places; sustainable transportation in the design and provision of infrastructure and public transport and good governance by the community for the community.

A means by which such manifold aspirations might be articulated and pursued is through the ‘model’ urban design protocols, being developed in many countries, including New Zealand.

2.6.1 New Zealand Urban Design Protocol

Urban design is a relatively new field, and has only recently achieved widespread attention in New Zealand. The Urban Design Protocol was created by the Ministry for the Environment as part of the Government’s Sustainable Development Programme of Action in 2005. Its aims were to ensure our towns and cities are healthy, safe and attractive places where business, social and cultural life can flourish. The protocol is to be implemented through the actions of its 174 signatories (as updated on 29 July, 2009) through leadership by government, and through raising wider awareness of the value of quality urban design (Ministry for the Environment, 2009). A key theme in the protocol is the need for all signatories to work together, learning from each other to achieve the vision of improved urban design in New Zealand.
As a signatory to the protocol Whangarei District Council is committed to creating quality urban design across the district. The two requisites of being a signatory are to appoint an urban design champion and to develop and monitor an action plan to promote quality urban design. Included among the actions of that plan is the delivery of an urban design strategy for the region/district.

The protocol identifies six essential attributes that successful towns and cities share:

- Competitive places that thrive economically and facilitate creativity and innovation;
- Liveable places that provide a choice of housing, work and lifestyle options;
- Environmentally responsible places that manage all aspects of the environment sustainably;
- Inclusive places that offer opportunities for all citizens;
- Distinctive places that have a strong identity and sense of place; and,
- Well-governed places that have a shared vision and sense of direction.

The seven following design qualities (the “7 Cs”) are of particular importance to the sustainable development of towns and cities (Ministry for the Environment, 2005, p.4):

- **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.

The council needs to develop and implement design guidelines for the district to foster quality environments that meet the ends of a changing community and result in a high quality built environment. It is important that these principles are not seen in isolation but as a coherent set, which work together to achieve a holistic outcome.

### 2.6.2 Implementation

The recent interest in urban design within the public and private sectors, and among community organisations, rises from the fact that high quality urban environment may be able to significantly help New Zealander’s live more sustainably. Many hope that better urban design can tangibly enhance New Zealand’s enviable lifestyle, and even help to sustain economic development (Ministry for the Environment, 2005).

Today, the principles of new urbanism have been included in various aspects of urban design work in New Zealand to a greater or lesser extent. Examples include:

- In 1995 the Auckland Regional Council commissioned the preparation of urban design guidelines to shape a more public transport-supportive urban form that follows many of the principles of New
Urbanism. The guidelines are part of the regional land transport strategy and can be used for new developments or to retrofit the existing built environment. The guidelines shape urban form through zoning and land use controls to support public transport, physical design, processes and incentives (Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 1996, p. A10).

- Waitakere City Council has also adopted New Urbanism principles and these have been grouped into the following design elements: neighbourhood character, site layout, building location, visual and acoustic privacy, car parking and vehicle access, on-site outdoor space, entries to buildings, site facilities and landscape treatment (Waitakere City Council, 1995 as cited in Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 1996).

- The Arts Centre in Christchurch has been voted as one of the Top 20 Great Public Spaces on the Project for Public Spaces’ website. The reason is that the Centre is a vibrant venue for a huge range of New Zealand made art and crafts, shopping, education and entertainment. The speciality shops, fine art galleries, world-class theatre, art house cinemas, bars, restaurants and cafes, a bustling weekend Art, Craft and Produce Market, and an array of festivals and special events throughout the year (Project for Public Spaces, 2004). The Centre is an excellent example of adaptive reuse, making the space work for the community.

![Figure 1. Christchurch Arts Centre.](image-url)
3. GENERAL CONCEPTS

This study could not review the full range of elements in the urban design and new urbanism literature. Therefore, the focus has been selective, addressing the main issues of interest or contention. This chapter will look at urban design elements, such as mixed use, local character, heritage character and sense of place.

3.1 Mixed Use

The desire for sustainable urban communities with efficient use of infrastructure in New Zealand cities has resulted in a call for increased residential density in urban areas. Creating mixed use developments in town centres can help to achieve increased urban densities, stimulate the economy, prevent ‘dead’ office zones, and contribute to the vitality and attractiveness of town centres. Good design is crucial for urban living to be a viable long-term option for New Zealanders (Ministry for the Environment, 2009).

So what is mixed use development? North Shore City Council’s ‘Good Solutions Guide for Mixed Use Development in Town Centres’ (2005) has defined it as “combining different uses in close, compatible relationships, a mixed use development is one that contains non-residential (commercial, community, recreational or institutional) spaces, as well as residential ones. A mixed use development may be as large as an entire precinct, or as small as a single unit that contains both living and work spaces ...... it may be organised vertically, horizontally, or as some combination of the two”.

‘Vertical’ mixed use development is a single building which accommodates multiple uses, generally layered on a floor by floor basis with more active uses (e.g. retail/commercial) established at ground level with residential, visitors, office or other uses above. ‘Horizontal’ mixed use development is a group of adjacent buildings on a single site where each building fulfils a specific purpose. ‘Horizontal’ mixing of uses encourages building tenants and the public to walk through communal space to other buildings, stimulating opportunities such as outdoor dining (Adelaide City Council, 2009).

![Figure 2. Examples of horizontal (left) and vertical (right) mixed use developments](Source: North Shore City Council, 2005.)
3.1.1 The Importance of Mixed Use Development

Mixed use development has the potential to improve the vitality and attractiveness of town and city centres over single use development. Successful mixed use can have a beneficial impact upon the social and economic wellbeing of an area, enhancing viability, generating a strong sense of place and urbanism, and often producing an environment which is both attractive and sustainable. It provides choice, ease of access, and a sense of being in an active and dynamic urban setting. It creates a critical mass and level of activity which is greater than the sum of the individual uses, thereby making a critical contribution to location and character (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2002).

Not only does mixed use development enhance attractiveness, it also stimulates the evening/weekend economy, prevents ‘dead’ office zones and creates a safer environment by combining facilities used at different times of the day. Variety and vitality may be achieved equally by a mix within use or as a mix of different uses, thus a street with a variety of small shops will tend to be more lively and attractive than the same street with a combination of multiple stores and offices.

In terms of the environmental aspect, successful mixed use can have a significant impact on environmental quality and appearance. These can be important factors in determining attractiveness. Mixed use development provides greater opportunities for using public transport, and to encouraging trips on foot; hence reducing the need to travel by private motorised transport. The proximity to social, commercial and community facilities enables residents in town centre locations to carry out most of their activities without using transport of any sort, be it public or private (Department For Communities and Local Government, 2002). Although this is more to do with the location and connection of the variety of services found in town centres than with the inherent characteristics of mixed use development, insofar as a mixed use development brings people close to these facilities, then it performs a valuable contribution to the principle of sustainable development.

Successful mixed use development also enables people to reduce the amount of time they spend travelling, thereby decreasing road congestion, traffic pollution, and wasted time (North Shore City Council, 2005, p. 8). For these reasons, location is a crucial factor in deciding where mixed use developments are located. Obviously, the more destinations (i.e. shops, offices, public services, entertainment) are clustered together within walking distance of the town centre, the more suitable it is for this kind of mixed use development. This factor also relates to destinations outside the town centre, for example, the suburban centres.

When it comes to residential land use, mixed use development is often seen as a manifestation of a particular lifestyle. New Zealand research (as cited in Ministry for the Environment, 2005, p.43) on user perceptions of mixed use developments for the Auckland Regional Council notes that, “in most cases residents move to these [mixed use] areas in pursuit of a particular lifestyle. This lifestyle is based on ‘convenience’ living, enjoying both personal safety, and the ability to be part of a real community”. Mixed use developments offer a variety of housing types aimed at different segments of the market which
accommodate a range of lifestyles, from high-rise apartments aimed at young professionals, through terrace housing occupied by small families, to affordable housing for families, older people and single people.

Although mixed use residential developments, in particular low-rise terraces and medium-rise apartments, are rarely seen in Whangarei and there is seen to be a lack of demand for living in these types of housing, this could due to the fact that these choices never existed. People could be attracted to the concept when they see the development. Mixed use residential developments thus offer significant additional choice in the housing market.

![Figure 3. Examples of mixed use developments – commercial uses are located on the ground floor with residential uses above.](image)

Source: North Shore City Council, 2005.

In conclusion, mixed use development helps to minimise travel distances and improve access to employment, services and recreation. It provides opportunities by allowing different housing types located in town centres or other suburban centres, where a relatively high intensity of different uses locate in close proximity. It helps to contain urban sprawl and allow residents to be close to new or existing services and facilities. Mixed use provides convenience and a safer environment, and most importantly, it retains the town centre’s vibrancy and attractiveness.

### 3.2 Local Character and Amenity

Local character is one of the generators of urban design. It is the distinctive identity of a particular place that results from the interaction of many factors – built environment, land use patterns, landscape, history, style and era of architectures, people and their activities. Character can be distinguished from the individual attributes that constitute it: density, connectivity, scale, use. While each of these qualities may be advantageous in its own way, ‘character’ describes the additional benefit that results when such qualities combine to create an easily recognisable identity. An inner-city suburb, an older, well-established suburb and a seaside village all have their own, quite distinct local character.

If a design does ensure connection and supports local character, a range of benefits flow. Some are economic, such as increased attractiveness and competitiveness of the city. Researches have found that urban design that respects and supports local character can attract highly skilled workers and high-tech
businesses. Such workers and potential business investment are more discriminating about the sort of city they wish to locate to. In terms of social value, social inclusiveness and wellbeing increased vitality and safety, and the simple satisfaction gained by both residents and visitors from the availability of pleasant amenities and facilities. Environmentally, urban design that supports local character can encourage the conservation and responsible use of non-renewable resources (Ministry for the Environment, 2005). Overall, urban design has a key role to play in shaping the identity and amenity of the environments so as to maximise their appeal as a place to visit, work and live.

3.2.1 Neighbourhood Character

Though place-specific identifies may be defined at city-wide or even regional levels, support for local character is strongest at the scale of individual neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood character is important because urban neighbourhoods, as well as being functional units, provide an important source of ‘identity’ or ‘meaning’ for their residents. It is essentially the combination of the public and private realms. Every property, open space, heritage or distinctive building makes a contribution, whether great or small. More specifically, the location and quality of buildings, streetscapes, public facilities and pedestrian infrastructure are elements of urban form that determine comfort within the neighbourhood. It is the cumulative impact of all these contributions that establishes neighbourhood character and creates the impression that a place is interesting, safe and attractive. The key to understanding character is being able to describe how the features of an area come together to give that neighbourhood its own particular character (Department of Planning and Community Development, 2001).

In defining neighbourhood character, it is important to understand the differences between neighbourhood character and heritage. While all areas have a history or a heritage, not all areas are historically significant. Heritage significance has a greater degree of rigour and is determined by recognised criteria set by New Zealand Historic Places Trust and local authorities.

Neighbourhood character is an emerging concept more open to accommodating community opinion and involves consideration of streetscapes rather than individual buildings. When taken into account the different neighbourhoods and localities of suburbs in Whangarei and outer villages, exhibit different and examples of neighbourhood character. This can depend on when a suburb/village was established, the surrounding natural environment features, cultures, heritage, rural, urban or coastal settlements and a whole range of other factors.

Neighbourhood character can be seen as a form of resident attachment to their neighbourhood. This attachment can depend on the level of social participation and interaction on the part of individual residents, as well as specific neighbourhood characteristics (Woolever, 1992). Neighbourhood character is used in planning to protect character values through design guidelines and identifying any threats to the desired future character in parts of cities and towns in New Zealand and elsewhere. Such controls are generally driven by the community’s desire to retain a valued sense of place.
3.2.2 Amenity and Character

The Resource Management Act (RMA) defines ‘amenity values’ as "those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes.” Typically a person would view amenity to be matters such as ‘privacy’, ‘pleasantness’, ‘clean air’ or ‘peace and quiet’. Matters such as noise, odour, density of development, and shading contribute to amenity.

While amenity attributes present tangible and measurable matters such as physical noise measurements, amenity values represent less tangible matters such as people’s perceptions of noise, culture, expectations, desires and tolerance. Amenity values can be defined at a range of spatial levels such as city-wide, suburb, neighbourhood, street, and site; at each level they contribute to the identity of an area and provide a ‘sense of place’.

It can be argued that amenity values are distinct from character. While all landscapes have character, not all landscapes contribute to amenity values (Letter from New Zealand Institute of Architects to PCE 1996, as cited in Ministry for the Environment, 2005). Amenity values include factors other than those mentioned in the RMA, such as the status of living in a particular suburb. Character is about sense of place and community meaning. Regardless of the character of an area there are standards of amenity that apply to all development. These basic amenity standards include overshadowing, overlooking, daylight angles. Sometimes, these amenity standards can have an effect on neighbourhood character. Therefore, amenity and neighbourhood character should be treated separately.

3.3 Heritage and Character

Heritage provides a second important source of character. Heritage is about identity. It is something that gives us a sense of place and informs us about who we are and how our society has developed over time. Heritage can be something valued by a single person or it can be part of a wider group’s sense of identity and character. Its scope is much broader than ‘place’; it includes intangible as well as tangible heritage – facets of our past and present that have special significance to us, spiritual and social connections, as well as physical structure and natural features. It may be significant for scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical reasons or for any other special cultural value. Heritage is a linkage between the past and the future and enables us to connect with traditions and celebrations that we may otherwise know little about. Our shared heritage can help us understand the richness and complexity of our identity, as well as that of our own local communities. This report does not attempt to survey the extensive literature that exists on this subject. It mainly focuses on the discussion of built heritage. However, more information on historic heritage can be found in the Whangarei District Historic Heritage Report, which formed one of the Sustainable Futures 30/50’s background documents.

The literature finds that historic buildings make “a great contribution to the character, diversity and sense of identity of urban area “(as cited in Ministry for the Environment, 2005). This attribute implies more than a memorable or attractive appearance. Historic buildings and those neighbourhood buildings associated with
it, such as schools, shops and places of worship, all help to define an area’s sense of place and meaning. A basic tenet of good urban design is to understand this concept of local distinctiveness.

Heritage value in urban areas can be defined by a number of criteria and describes a range of meaning building up a picture of particular distinctiveness of individual places and their contribution within a greater urban context.

Whangarei’s historic residential, commercial and industrial buildings and structures are a valuable and finite resource. They are important in shaping the character of our CBD and each of the suburbs. The influence of early architecture and land development patterns on the district’s settlements makes a strong contribution to our ‘sense of place’.

Some of the buildings and precincts that remain from the past include:

- **Springhead (55 Russell Road)** – Built in 1852 and the oldest remaining home in Whangarei.
- **Keyte’s Barn (19 Aubrey Street)** – Built in the early 1860s and used as a funeral parlour.
- **Reyburn House (Lower Dent Street)** – Built between 1865 and 1875. It is a landmark in terms of Whangarei’s history and visual identity.
- **Cubitts House (11 Mill Road)** – Built between 1874 and 1876. It is one of the best examples in Whangarei of the early colonial style architecture.

In addition to these residential dwellings, there are a number of early commercial/civic heritage buildings in Whangarei. Many of the very early buildings were destroyed in the fires of 1899 and 1900.

For example:

- **The first courthouse in Walton Street** (now a tavern), built in 1891.
- **The former Whangarei Railway Station** in Railway Road, constructed in 1924-5 is an excellent example of station architecture of that era. It reflects the expansion of New Zealand’s railway system to outlying provincial centres in the early twentieth century, and Whangarei’s emergence as Northland’s largest settlement.
- **The Municipal Chambers** in Bank Street built in 1912, a fine example of a civic building. The building was opened in 1913 and housed the municipal offices, library and reading room.
- **The Grand Hotel** (2 Bank Street) – The original hotel, built in approximately 1870 burnt down completely in the 1890s and was rebuilt in 1900. The current building was originally called the Commercial Hotel and was re-named the Grand Hotel after the 1953 Royal Tour of New Zealand by HRH Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh who stayed in the hotel with their entourage.
- **The old public library** at 7 Rust Avenue, opened in 1936, and won the Gold Medal of the New Zealand Institute of Architects. It now houses the Northland Arts Promotion Trust.
Urban areas are the public realm of the city and are central to the way we experience the city as we travel across and through it. These built architectures are in part a response to particular and distinctive aspects of topography and industry in the urban areas. The quality of distinctive places is crucial to the quality of urban life within it, our sense of identity and belonging. Evaluated appropriately the heritage significance and opportunities of the urban areas will lead to better considered responses to future development.

3.4 Sense of Place
The term ‘sense of place’ has been mentioned several times throughout the report. So, what is a ‘sense of place’?

Sense of place is one of many characteristics displayed by people congruent with local identity (Xu, 1995). People develop a “sense of place” through experience and knowledge of a particular area. A sense of place emerges through knowledge of the history, geography and geology of an area, its flora and fauna, the legends of a place, and a growing sense of the land and its history after living there for a time.

The ‘sense of place’ comprises two essential elements:

- The ‘community’ or those people who feel attachment or a sense of belonging to a place;
- The physical and intangible elements of a place that contribute to its special character or ‘familiarity’.

Given the ‘community’ is an integral component of the overall definition of sense of place, consideration needs to be given to the definition of the community and to setting parameters that will be considered when identifying the values that contribute to a sense of place.

Thus, in considering and defining a sense of place, it is important to recognise the following:

- That everyone has a unique sense of place but that there are some common values that contribute to the special character of some areas;
- That the ‘sense of place’ is dynamic and will change over time and across communities; and,
- That the definition of the ‘community’ will influence those matters and elements that are considered and that recognition needs to be given to the diversity of these communities and the differences (and commonalties) between groups.

In light of the definition for ‘sense of place’, there are a number of physical and intangible elements that are considered to contribute to the values of a sense of place:

- **Natural features**
  For example, topography and vegetation (landscapes).
- **Land use patterns**
  For example, parks, reserves, open spaces and rural landscapes. Land use patterns can evoke powerful images and a sense of identity for areas, particularly where these land uses have a strong history (e.g. farming communities in New Zealand).
• **The built landscape**
  For example, design and character of neighbourhoods (e.g. street widths, design, and other public infrastructure).

• **Views and gateways**
  For example, points of entry, scenic roads, and particular points of interest.

• **History and heritage features**
  For example, sites of remembrance, nostalgia, historic significance or similar.

• **Gathering places and focal points**
  For example, areas of congregation or community focus (including schools, beaches etc) that provide a visual reference point to a place.

Developing a sense of place helps people identify with their region and with each other. A strong sense of place can lead to more sensitive stewardship of our cultural history and natural environment (Making Sense of Place Inc, 2009). Places that lack a ‘sense of place’ are sometimes referred to as ‘placeless’. Placeless landscapes are those that have no special relationship to the places in which they are located. For example, roadside strip shopping malls, petrol stations, convenience stores, fast food chains and chain department stores are often cited as placeless landscape elements. Even some historic sites or districts that have been heavily commercialised for tourism and new housing developments are sometimes defined as having lost their sense of place (Wikipedia, 2009).
4. SUSTAINABLE FUTURES 30/50 DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

The development pattern outlined in Figure 4 below represents a managed, consolidated development path based upon a structured five tier settlement pattern. This hierarchical arrangement is as follows: Whangarei City as the primary district and regional urban centre with a strong, protected and enduring CBD (chapter 5); a satellite town at Marsden Point/Ruakaka which complements (but does not compete with Whangarei City) (chapter 6); five urban villages within greater Whangarei urban area (chapter 7); one rural (Hikurangi) and two coastal growth nodes at Parua Bay and Waipu Township (chapter 8); and two rural villages (Maungakaramea and Maungatapere) along with eight coastal villages located along the coastline from Waipu Cove in the south to Oakura in the north (chapter 9).

Figure 4. Satellite town/rural and coastal villages.
5. WHANGAREI CITY – THE PRIMARY DISTRICT AND REGIONAL URBAN CENTRE

5.1 History of Whangarei City and Its Development Pattern

The location of central Whangarei is something of an accident of history. The Whangarei harbour has long been a centre of Maori population because of its resources and strategic location. However at the time of European settlement the more prominent pa in the outer harbour had been abandoned because of the effects of the musket wars. Instead Maori settlement had retreated to hills at the upper reaches of the harbour. European traders settled nearby on the Hatea River. Whangarei first developed around the wharf and town basin with Walton Street as the ‘main street’.

As it grew, however, Whangarei developed into two distinct areas; the original commercial area centred on the Town Basin and Walton Street, and a residential area on the volcanic spur of Bank Street. This higher land avoided the flood prone lower land and afforded better views down the harbour.

Gradually businesses also began relocating to Bank Street which became the main street. The wharf declined in importance, while the railway station located at the south end of Bank Street became the transport hub.

The triangular area in front of the Grand Hotel became the central public space, fronted by the Borough Council Chambers and the railway station. The town at this time was built on trade in Kauri timber, Kauri gum, and coal.

A period of stagnation followed the end of the Kauri trade during the early decades of the twentieth century. After the Second World War a new period of growth commenced, based on dairy farming and the long overdue construction of all weather roads linking Whangarei to the rest of Northland and to Auckland. The low lying land east of Walton Street was reclaimed and developed for light industry.

The growth in traffic reinforced the intersection of Bank Street and Cameron Street as the centre of town. This was the intersection of the main north-south highway, and the main east-west route across the city. This core intersection also features a distinctive grid of streets: Rathbone, James, John and Walton Streets and Dent, Robert, Hannah, Cameron, Vine, Clyde, Rose and Albert Streets. As a result buildings on street corners over a range of historic periods share a common interest in how they address the grid intersection.

Both Bank and Cameron Streets were the main retail streets, but gradually Cameron Street gained ascendancy. At the same time the area in front of the Grand Hotel lost its public space function when the railway embankment was built around one side, and the railway station and later the council chambers were shifted.
The success of Cameron Street as the main retail strip, however, created its own problems. The traffic congestion, lack of pedestrian amenity, and the lack of a public place in the centre of the city led to the creation of the Cameron Street mall in the 1970s. A one-way street circulation was put in place at the same time in James Street and part of Cameron Street. A parking precinct with angle parking was created in the one way streets to compensate for kerbside parking lost in the mall section of Cameron Street.

Finally, Whangarei’s urban design came full circle with the redevelopment of the Town Basin by the Council in the mid 1990s. The original centre of town was refurbished as a public space. It re-established the connection between Whangarei and the harbour, and emphasised Whangarei’s history.

In doing so, however, the refurbishment of the Town Basin highlighted the lack of amenity in the rest of the central city and the lack of a quality central public place in the commercial area around Cameron Street. The development of the town basin has also led to the desire for stronger connections between the Town Basin and the city centre.

Other developments have also caused the council to reconsider the future direction of the central city. Competition from new internal malls, such as Okara Shopping Mall, raised issues about the future direction and role of the traditional city centre. Increased emphasis on shopping as a leisure activity raises issues about the amenity of public spaces in retail areas.

5.1.1 Development Issues

Central Public Place

As discussed above, the centre of commercial and retail activity is in Cameron Street and around the intersection of Cameron Street and Bank Street. The Cameron Street Mall is the only open public place near this centre of activity. However there are several shortcomings of the mall as a central public place. It is not anchored by either prominent buildings or a natural feature. Spatially it is part of a street, rather than a distinct and defined central space. It has linear proportions. The mall is an impediment to traffic circulation through the city centre. It is also tired and in need of refurbishment.
**Streets**

Streets are the public places where people spend most of their time. They link and integrate other key public places. Whangarei’s streets have a mixed quality. Within the main retail area around Cameron Street and lower Bank Street there is a consistency of building scale and some interesting character facades. However this urban quality disappears in the streets leading toward the Town Basin where the level and quality of development is uneven. This results in a ‘no man’s land’ separating city centre from the Town Basin. There is no clear route between the city centre and Town Basin. At the same time the footpath areas do not have high amenity. Paving is generally low quality and detailing poor. There is little street furniture and what there is does not contribute to the quality of the streetscape.

**Green Spaces**

Green spaces and natural features provide relief from hard urban areas, help to give definition to the human elements of the city, and help establish a ‘sense of place’. Whangarei has some wonderful green spaces but they are not integrated into the city centre.

The Hatea River and the town basin is the obvious main feature within the CBD and its surroundings have been successfully refurbished. The Town Basin connects the city within its setting and historical origins, and reinforces a strong ‘sense of place’. However it is divorced from the main commercial area. The main barriers between the centre of the city and the town basin are:

- Distance;
- The fact that the streets from town do not lead directly to the Town Basin;
- Lack of visual links between the two areas;
- Heavy traffic flows on Dent Street, Quay Street area; and,
- Lack of amenity and interest in the streets between the commercial heart and the Town Basin.

The Waiarohia Stream is the other main waterway in the central city. It has the potential to strongly define the southern edge of the central area. However at present is largely ignored. While Cafler Park shows how the stream can be treated as an attractive amenity feature, that park is hidden away. The rest of the stream, including where it frames entrances to the central city, has low amenity.

Another natural feature is the volcanic spur of Bank Street. This is expressed in Laurie Hall Park which provides views over the central city area and helps define the end of the retail area on Bank Street. However, Laurie Hall Park is cut off from the main part of the city centre by the wall of buildings along Rathbone Street and the car parking at the end of Robert Street.

** Entrances**

The entrances to Whangarei have some potentially strong features, but at present give an overall negative first impression.
The Hatea River provides a distinctive and attractive gateway from the north-east. However the strength of this entrance is dissipated between the river and the city centre. From the south-west and south-east the approaches to Whangarei are through light industrial areas and across the Waiarohia Stream. As mentioned the stream presently has low amenity. The railway embankment over-bridges provide strong gateways but have low visual amenity. The public car park area in the corner of Vine and Rose Streets does not contribute to the amenity values of CBD area either.

**Traffic and Parking**

The following traffic issues which impact on the central area were identified in council’s early study on the CBD:

- Poor arterial routes around the perimeter of the CBD. The arterial system does not work completely. A large percentage of traffic entering the central city passes straight through. This increases congestion and reduces amenity within the city centre. It has particular impact on Rathbone Street.
- Poor circulation within the CBD. The main reasons for this are the one way streets and the barrier caused by the Cameron Street mall. This forces people to take longer, more circuitous routes to access destinations within the main commercial area. It decreases efficiency, result in unnecessary travel and turning movements, and increases conflicts.
- Legibility. The system is not easy to understand, especially to out of town people. It is not obvious which the arterial routes are. It is not obvious where the centre of town is or how to get to it. Circulation options through the central city are confusing.
- Parking. There are several parking issues. A shortage of both short term and long term car parking spaces was identified by the previous traffic planning study conducted by the Council.

**Character and Identity**

Whangarei District has its own strong identity and flavour drawn from natural elements, such as the volcanic rock, picturesque headlands and beaches, and cultural and heritage elements. However, many of these aspects are not expressed in our CBD and the town basin waterfront area. At present, the development of these areas has not reached its full potential as a vibrant centre and visitor destination.

**Other Issues**

Apart from issues identified above, there are other issues currently affecting Whangarei’s CBD, these include:

- The lack of strong ‘heart’ to the city and parts of the CBD are in decline;
- Sprawling commercial activity weakening the CBD hub;
- Restricted retail ‘energy’ and limited opening hours;
- High demand for limited commercial space;
- Providing for safe cycling opportunities;
- Concern about personal safety, particularly outside of business hours;
- Little after hours’ activity and some anti-social behaviour;
- Poor commercial ‘gateways’.
### 5.1.2 Opportunities

A number of urban design and traffic management options can address issues that affect Whangare’s CBD. The following table summarises the key options and their relationship to the Urban Design Protocol’s attributes and qualities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improve Areas</th>
<th>Design Options</th>
<th>Urban Design “7 C’s”</th>
<th>Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green spaces</td>
<td>More green connections and spaces</td>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>Rehabilitate the water ways (Waiarohia Stream), extending the town basin area, and planting street trees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streets</td>
<td>Physical connections to link to water</td>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>Provide useable green open spaces to link the Town Basin with the Cameron Street Mall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed use/density</td>
<td>Introduction of residential mix use into CBD</td>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Introduce inner city living with both high and medium density levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central public place/high quality public realm</td>
<td>Strategic location of new focal points/developments/facilities</td>
<td>Context Character Creativity</td>
<td>Create a new pedestrian plaza by removing some buildings between Cameron Street and Vine Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>Extend CBD activities into evening and weekend</td>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Events, festivals and celebrations relating to local setting, produce and lifestyle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central public place/streets</td>
<td>Create a series of pedestrian scaled areas</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Provide a central network of streets which are pedestrian friendly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central public place/mixed use</td>
<td>Introduce new building typologies that encourage a greater mix</td>
<td>Choice Character</td>
<td>Provide retail and commercial offices together with residential apartments along city blocks fronting Dent Street and the Town Basin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>Avoid one-way roads to improve accessibility and connectivity</td>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>Re-design Cameron Street and remove street malls or one-way systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Locate key parking facilities close to arterial ring</td>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>Kerb side parking close to retail areas (short term parking); open high amenity car parks (medium term parking); car parking buildings (medium and long term parking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>Provides public transport opportunities within CBD</td>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>4km central bus circuit loop, operating every 15 – 20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>Alternative public transport modes need to be considered for pedestrian oriented CBD within less car traffic</td>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>Water taxi, tram etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Whangarei's CBD Development Plan – 20/20 Plus
5.2.1 Introduction

Given the current development of Whangarei city centre is hampered by a number of classic urban planning issues identified in section 5.1.1, there is still tremendous opportunity to link the city to nearby landscape attractions, develop key facilities in town and broadly evolve Whangarei as a national attraction for business and visitors. Whangarei District Council has proposed the further development of the central city and the Town Basin area. An important focus for the consultation process has been the project, Whangarei 20/20 Plus – CBD Guideline Development Plan, developed in association with urban designers Isthmus Group, Landscape architects Littoralis and engineers Traffic Design Group. The project was prepared in 2006 as a basis for discussion with the general public and interest groups.

Whangarei City has an extensive water-oriented edge and dramatic bush clad mountain backdrop, which creates an attractive setting to the development the city centre. The recognition of the importance of this distinctive character is highlighted in the Whangarei 20/20 Plus - CBD Guideline Development Plan through the following agreed vision for the City, which states:

"With a network of regional destinations, colourful precincts, a pedestrian structured city centre laced with tropical green and edged by harbour waters, brings diverse people together to express the art of creating an ultimate living environment”.

5.2.2 CBD Characters

Whangarei city centre’s visual landscape is characterised by two steep hills to east and west. The city form appears to be squeezed between the hills and the CBD lies on a largely reclaimed peninsula that that branches out from a narrow valley strip running north south. This unique topography provides strong character to the identity of Whangarei City. The narrow piece of flat land allows intimate compact city development; however, at the same time, it may constrain growing patterns of the city. This modified and often reclaimed area of CBD also creates technical building considerations and potential flood risk. Hence some of the earlier buildings sought to develop on the slightly elevated area of Bank Street away from the waters edge.

The city derives its character from the major land use of the CBD, being a concentration of business, retail, light industrial and commercial activities; and the characteristics that they display as places of community gathering and activity. Many small shops and offices in the downtown area are generally two storeys in height and which, in many cases, are consistent in the style of their facades. The presence of verandahs, a mix of different signs and the development of newer buildings, all contribute to the unique character of the CBD townscapes. In recognition of these elements, the Whangarei 20/20 Plus has incorporated urban design approach and provided a conceptual design framework and land use considerations in its identified precincts.
5.2.3 An Overall Approach

The Whangarei 20/20 Plus – CBD Guideline Development Plan seeks to recognise the existing natural and ‘man-made’ features of the Whangarei city that contribute positively to the unique identity and ‘sense of place’ of the CBD and Town Basin area, and to strengthen these features in future development in a way that also achieves the vision articulated by the council, and the community.

The potential exists to establish a more consolidated town centre over time providing for a great variety of uses within an attractive environment. Integral to the success of the town centre will be successful methods to minimise conflict with traffic and provide a better connection between the CBD and Town Basin area. It is anticipated that the growth of tourism opportunities will develop alongside the growth of the town centre and local business opportunities.

While future development will inevitably change existing conditions in some ways, it is considered essential that the actual or potential value and amenity of existing character are not compromised by such development.

5.2.4 Development Concept Plans

The 20/20 study aims to revitalise Whangarei’s CBD and brings in the concept of urban precincts. An ‘urban precinct’ can be characterised as an identified area possessing a defined character that attracts appropriate development solutions. It is proposed to break down the CBD into smaller walkable neighbourhoods. Development focused in smaller neighbourhoods will enhance creation of diversity and interest to the city, while the character of each precinct will guide the direction of future developments in the area.

![Figure 6. Whangarei CBD showing six identified precincts.](image-url)
As shown in Figure 6, six precincts exhibiting a distinctive character have been identified within the CBD area. They are: Forum North/Gateway, CBD Core, Town Basin, Waiarohia District, Marine Village, Railside/Okara Harbourside. The precincts will break down the large spread of areas into smaller walkable neighbourhoods. Development focused in smaller neighbourhoods will enhance creation of diversity and interests to the city, while the character of each precinct will guide the direction of future developments in the area.

**Forum North/Gateway**

Forum North and gateway are at the western end of the CBD. The ‘five-finger-roundabout’ at the intersection of Bank Street and Tarewa Road is the main gateway for people entering the Whangarei from the south. There also is a night life strip on Vine Street and civic conurbation towards the north along Bank Street from Forum North. Cafler Park is hidden behind Forum North and is poorly accessed. The plan proposes to enhance the southern entrance to the city, not only at the roundabout but also through treating the length of Tarewa Road from SH. Redevelopment of Rose Street plaza, together with a transport hub and Grand Hotel heritage corner will further define the entrance point. The distinct and legible civic cluster is improved with the addition of a civic entry plaza. A series of pedestrian lanes open up Vine Street to create a safe and accessible evening strip. A new parking area and a broad extension to Cafler Park is pro experience to the city centre.
**CBD Core**
The CBD Core is essentially the area inside the ring road formed by Bank, Dent and Walton streets. It is the traditional retail centre with office and entertainment facilities. The lack of connection between the Town Basin and the Cameron Street Mall has remained as an outstanding issue since the original 20/20 proposals in 1996. The block sizes are generally large and links between the streets are weak. Some streetscape enhancements have been done over the years but generally stop at Robert Street, two blocks short of the Town Basin. The plan proposes the introduction of a central Whangarei water feature - the grand canal - as a focus of waterfront activity, potential public beach and recreational open space that brings water into the CBD to reflect historic canals. In addition, useable green open spaces to visually link the Town Basin with the Cameron Street Mall as well as to create strong pedestrian oriented streets through the CBD core. Walton Street widening and boulevard treatment along with redefinition of the built edge of retail frontage along the street is recommended to form a central spine of the CBD. Possible re-orientation of parking and introduction of a grower’s market to Laurie Hall Park is seen as an option to stimulate weekend attraction. Re-tail and commercial offices together with residential apartments are proposed to form strong city blocks fronting Dent Street and the Town Basin.

**Town Basin**
The Town Basin has direct frontage to the Hatea River and marina at the eastern edge of the CBD. The boat moorings and cluster of cafes are highly attractive to both locals and visitors to the area. The realignment of Dent Street has provided several large waterfront development sites and a pedestrian bridge. The plan proposes not to distract from existing character of the area but rather to add accommodation capability, key public destinations and to provide for extension of the green necklace to the aquatic centre and Whangarei Falls. The key challenge of the precinct is to open up and integrate the area with Dent Street through a
major boulevard treatment that will catalyse the connection between the Town Basin and the CBD retail core.

**Figure 11. Town Basin Concept Plan.**

**Waiarohia District**

Waiarohia District lies between the CBD core and Marine Village in the middle of the peninsula. The area currently suffers weak identity, poor legibility and limited amenity in terms of green spaces. A supermarket and several car yards dominate the area. The proposal provides for the establishment of strong east-west street connections to link the CBD Core and Marine Village precincts together with strong street intersections. The introduction of linear central green into the centre of the precinct is aimed to restructure the district and draw focus to the southern riverside. The eastern edge of Walton Street has much redevelopment potential as a mixed use area with residential opportunities that could appeal to elderly, young professionals and students.

**Figure 12. Waiarohia District Concept Plan.**
Marine Village

Marine Village precinct lies towards the tip of Hihiaua Peninsula, at the confluence of the Hatea River and Waiarohia Stream. The area is currently occupied by low-rise light industrial sheds and some local arts facilities. Hihiaua Reserve, located at the very tip of the peninsula, is an under-utilised empty site that suffers from poor drainage. The precinct is proposed to make use of the extensive water edge and scale of the existing light industrial sheds. To retain the light industrial feel, marine industries are encouraged together with a mixture of new residential townhouses, a scattering of artist’s studios, galleries and shops are proposed. To add to the amenity and develop strong character, it is proposed to bring water in the form of a canal into the precinct and to treat the water edge as a continuous public space. The site on Hihiaua Reserve is identified as a possible catalyst destination site to be assigned for an iconic building / destination facility such as an arts campus. The Hihiaua Reserve could be redeveloped as a high quality sculpture park. A feature pedestrian bridge could provide convenient walking connections with the Okara Park area.

Figure 14. Marine Village Concept Plan.

Figure 13. Promote inner city residential mixed use, central parks, strong east west streets and strong intersection.

Figure 15. An island, a new canal, low rise residential apartments, key facility like an art campus with sculpture park and iconic bridges.
**Railside/Okara Harbourside**

Railside and Okara Harbourside lie to the south of CBD core across Waiarohia Stream. The area features a sports stadium park. The water edge is north facing and is undeveloped. Large format retailers and supply stores dominate the area. The proposal includes the rediscovery of the old rail station by inserting a new road access. New public walkways are conceived for the river edge. Large format retail centres which serve the region are retained and are focused around a nodal redevelopment on the intersection. Pedestrian links are forged to a redeveloped sports centre in Okara Park. Potentially a harbour side destination campus or facility could be developed on the United Carriers site, towards the potential harbour bridge.

![Figure 16. Railside/Okara Harbourside Concept Plan.](image)

**5.3 Town Basin Site**

**5.3.1 History of Town Basin**

Whangarei’s Town Basin is an important and successful amenity and resource for Whangarei residents and visitors alike. The Town Basin also has a significant pre-European history that is of significance to Maori. From the 1840s the Town Basin area has had a history of activities involving clusters of buildings on the waterfront. Uses have included orchards and dwellings and it has long been a focal point for marine based transportation, commercial and fishing industries.

The Town Basin is one of the most valued areas of land and water in our district. Our community has strong feelings of attachment, ownership and identity regarding the Town Basin and its surrounds. In 1996, the Council redeveloped part of the land around the Town Basin, to make the most of what was a very under-utilised property surrounding a beautiful marina.

The objectives of the development of the Town Basin in the 1996 were:

- Retaining the existing activities at the Town Basin Marina;
- Providing strong pedestrian connections between Cameron Street mall in the CBD and the Town Basin, the Hatea Riverside walks and the Whangarei Aquatic Centre;
Creating a green/open space connection along the Hatea River;
Maintaining visual and pedestrian connections along John Street, James Street and Walton Street to the Hatea River and the John Street bridge;
Developing high quality landscaped public open space;
Establishing a building of significant community interest.

The existing Town Basin reflects part of these objectives, with a mix of cafes, restaurants, speciality retail shops, art galleries/shops and the Clapham’s Clock Museum. The adjacent Marina provides for visiting yachts and launches from local and international locations. A portion of the marina also serves a small local fishing fleet. As a result of the latest Dent Street realignment project, a portion of waterfront land and its adjacent blocks have became an opportunity for new development. Further development of the sites must contribute positively to the unique character and history of the Town Basin environment.

5.3.2 Issues
As discussed earlier, the Town Basin is one of the six distinct precincts that Council has identified in the Whangarei 20/20 Plus conceptual framework for revitalising Whangarei’s CBD. However, some of the objectives identified have not been achieved. The existing Town Basin development is limited in geographic extent and there is significant opportunity to extend the area further along the waterfront (both up-river and towards the harbour). There are issues that need to be addressed before future expansion can take place in this area. These issues include:

- Lack of connection to the waterfront via open sight lines and pedestrian access.
- There is lack of connection back to the CBD core and to the Cameron Street Mall.
- Lack of visual and pedestrian connections between John and James Streets, and down to the waterfront area.
- A mix and variety of activities and uses needs to be provided while avoiding an overlap with other established activities within the Cameron Street Mall retail area.
- The 360-degree visual exposure and heavy vehicle traffic will be a challenge for accessibility to the highly-visible iconic facility.
- An increased number of vehicles within the area has the potential to adversely impact on the special amenity and character of the area.

These issues will need to be addressed through careful thoughts to urban design and management so that the significant resource values of the area are protected.

5.3.3 Town Basin Development Plan
Based on the Whangarei 20/20 Plus Town Basin Analysis, four options for Town Basin development were modelled. The options offered range from the grand canal strategy at one extreme (bringing the sea to the city) to the built up version which pulls the city to the sea. The big park option mediates these two while the mix combines the elements of water park and built edges in one proposal. While they stand as discreet
proposals and ideas there are embedded within them more possibilities. For instance the grand canal could start out as a big park thereby setting aside the land for the eventual development of a water space. The idea could be further reinforced by boulevarding Walton Street from the roundabout. Another simple and effective way of tying together a disparate building stock and giving a unified bas or floor to the city, or part of the city, is to implement simple high quality paving programmes which express local identity and materials on what is the most visible and extensive surface of public space (Brand, 2006, p.3).

This report does not attempt to analysis the proposals. Further information on this subject can be found on Council’s website and publications. However, the Town Basin development could be the first catalyst project of the 20/20 Plus Guideline and would set a precedent for Council initiated design-led development in the future.

5.3.4 Evaluation of Urban Design Principles

Context
There is widespread recognition of a number of issues that affect the Whangarei’s CBD. Through the Whangarei 20/20 Plus – CBD Guideline Development Plan, the Council considered there should be a visionary development plan for the future development of the city centre. The conceptual framework plan is the start to delivering an urban environment with a strong and unique sense of place. The 20/20 Plus study contains a rich level of detailed analysis and innovative design proposals which would support the development of key urban design initiatives in the District Plan and national urban design protocol.

Character
Through the Whangarei 20/20 Plus – CBD Guideline Development Plan, the Council has established characteristics that it believes reflect a distinctively Whangarei’s CBD vision. These characteristics include recognition of:

- Whangarei City as a regional destination
- A pedestrian structured city centre laced with tropical green and edged by harbour waters
- A place which brings diverse people together to express the art of creating an ultimate living environment

**Choice**
The *Whangarei 20/20 Plus – CBD Guideline Development Plan* contains a number of options for developments around the CBD and Town Basin site that will increase choice by providing for a range of different focuses. This plan also looks at ways to improve CBD’s traffic issues, and considers alternative travelling models, which provide choices in travel options.

**Connections**
*Whangarei 20/20 Plus* recognises the need of providing better connectivity between the CBD and Town Basin area through:
- Defining series of self sustaining precincts;
- Creating gathering places or public promenades in strategic locations;
- Enhancing streetscape and the green corridor along the river/harbour edge, which connect back to the surrounding hills;
- Extending mix of land use activities.

**Creativity**
*Whangarei 20/20 Plus* is a design led project, which includes works on CBD precincts, the Town Basin site, public open space, traffic systems and building typologies. An integrated planning of broader elements such as land use, open space provision and urban form would be focused along with streetscape enhancements. The success of this project would set a precedent for a Council-initiated design-led development for the rest of the city centre in a similar direction.

**Custodianship**
The *Whangarei 20/20 Plus* analyses the existing context at multiple scales to clarify the multiple interaction of issues including landscape relationships, urban structure, land use, movement/traffic, precinct character and building typology. The resulting conceptual plan identifies clearly defined precincts which may become the basis for developed quarter plans.

**Collaboration**
*Whangarei 20/20 Plus – CBD Guideline Development Plan* has been developed through collaboration between the Council, professional organisations, the community and key stakeholders. Enabling people to participate is a key initiative of *Whangarei 20/20 Plus*, and its success in addressing fundamental issues, developing a series of short term and long term concepts depends on the actions of Whangarei’s people, alongside with professional organisations, key stakeholders and investors.
5.3.5 Conclusion

The *Whangarei 20/20 Plus – CBD Guideline Development Plan* envisages a sustainable environment developed with the assistance of design guidelines relating to such matters as character, land use, open spaces, precincts, building type, local infrastructure (including roads, pedestrian and cycleway). To enable its implementation, the Council recognised the need to change past design and development practices. Through its programme, the Council has been able to raise both internal and external awareness of the benefits of quality urban design. It is important that the aims and aspirations of *Whangarei 20/20 Plus* align with the Whangarei District Plan and urban design principles.
6. URBAN VILLAGES/PRIMARY SUBURBAN NODES

6.1 Introduction

While the Whangarei CBD remains as a vibrant and strong centre providing the majority of business, commerce and retailing for the district, the suburban centres will provide a range of essential and convenient services to their immediate and extended communities.

It is expected that the development of suburban nodes at Kamo, Tikipunga, Onerahi, Maunu and Otaika will grow to around 10,000 people each in 2061. These five urban villages within greater Whangarei urban area will provide a mixed use of residential, commercial with limited light industrial development. These would include retailing activities, small to medium scale business services, supermarkets, gas stations, residential and community and recreation activities for the local community. The actual format of residential development would include detached, semi-detached and terrace housing, and low rise apartments – styles/types would be likely to vary from node to node, depending upon market demand and development conditions.

It is noted that suburban centre qualities are different to the urban context of the CBD. This is reflected in architectural styles, built form which would include opportunities for a suburban scale. Suburban centres give the local area and community much of its distinctive identity, and are a focus for local community events and transport connections, and thereby enhancing and maintaining the character and amenity of the area.

6.2 Urban Design Principles in Local Area Scale

6.2.1 Lively and Attractive Local Place

Mixed uses and human scale can give vitality and create attractive places that contribute to promoting safe and sustainable communities.

The design quality of suburban centres can help to facilitate social inclusion and sustainable living. The design process brings together principles with elements of local character to create distinctive places. It avoids the imposition of standardised solutions which make it difficult to tell one place apart from another. There should be a choice and mix of uses. The mix of uses is a key principle in urban design at the suburban centre scale. A variety of types, sizes, designs and mix of uses help to create vitality that maintain a particular suburban centre’s identity and adds to its attraction.

The most attractive suburban centres are those which offer in addition to houses a range of work, community facilities, shopping, educational and leisure opportunities. Together with quality in the public realm, they help to create a focus for the local community and shape a sense of place.

Whangarei does not have a wide range of medium to high density residential developments. The traditional expansion of the city through low density single house lot subdivision on the urban fringe, predominantly for home ownership, has been the standard model of suburban growth in Whangarei and the majority of
cities/towns in New Zealand. Apart from medium density infill around city areas, such as the Avenues, Regent, Kensington, the principal housing form of Whangarei’s suburbs has been the owner-occupied detached dwelling. At the 2006 censes, 78% of occupied dwellings in the district were separate dwellings (Whangarei District Council, 2009, p. 45). However, this picture is changing and the need for the type of urban consolidated development in Whangarei is growing given demographic, cultural and lifestyle changes. Urban consolidation does not only offer a wide range of housing choices, it also provides cost savings in land development, reduces travel distance to work and services, encourages the use of public transport, controls urban sprawl, creates community focal points and promotes social cohesion, connectedness and vitality.

6.2.2 Reinforce Local Identity

Where new development is to be located within a neighbourhood of distinctive spatial structure, townscape and landscape, the proposal should reinforce the existing character.

Each suburban centre has its own identity and future development should include an analysis of the physical attributes of spatial layout and townscape qualities. This includes the study of buildings and their relationships to the natural setting, to the streets and spaces around them. The council adopted urban structure plans in five suburban centres in 2009, with aims to make progress toward sustainable communities with a high quality of life, and assurance of the long term viability of residential and business investment.

The structure plans looked at the local character of each study area and proposed re-zoning and future land uses which respect and improve their particular context. The structure plans started bringing in the urban design principles, such as mixed use development and consolidated development appropriate to Whangarei.

Future development in Whangarei should consist of the following characteristics:

- Increase mixed uses and building forms if appropriate;
- Fit with heritage buildings in the neighbourhood;
- Connect with existing good development and offer links to future development opportunities; and,
- Identify opportunities for new community hub and open spaces to create identity.

6.3 Kamo

6.3.1 Heritage Character and Growth Pattern

Kamo was once a coal mining town in Whangarei District dating back to 1875. The Kamo Coal Mine opened during that time and it experienced booming growth with miners arriving, cottages and shops being built and roads constructed. Its early industry also included gum digging up Three Mile Bush Road. The place became known locally as 'Rowdy Town' or 'Gum Town' right into the early 1900's. The Three Mile Bush area was recognised as containing fertile farm land and farming became the predominate land use.

Mining continued on and off until 1955. Following the final closure of the mine, Kamo continued to progress, this time as a business, farming and residential area.
Today Kamo is a busy shopping centre, a suburb of Whangarei, yet it retains the essence of a village. Given the early coal mining industry in Kamo, the area contains many historic artifacts and individual buildings of heritage importance, such as the Hanlon’s house, Moehau House and the old school house.

6.3.2 Kamo Overall Role and Function
The population of the wider Kamo area was 11,223 in the 2006 census. Kamo will grow and consolidate in the future, growing from 11,223 people in 2006 to around 16,579 people by 2061\(^3\) (Whangarei District Council, 2008). Kamo provides the opportunity to live in an urban area, surrounded by rural environments. Areas surrounding Kamo, such as Three Mile Bush, Whau Valley and Springs Flat are used primarily for farming and horticultural purposes. While the majority of the population resides within the residential area around Kamo, a growing number of people are now living a more rural lifestyle in these areas.

6.3.3 Urban Issues
The Kamo area has a number of unique and special features. As the area develops it is important that these features are protected. Such features include geological features like volcanic cones, historical and cultural features such as stone walls, and natural features such as existing native bush.

The re-routing of the state highway onto the Kamo Bypass has led to a desire to maintain a viable commercial centre at Kamo, as well as the desire to create an identity for Kamo Village. Now that the road running through the Kamo Village shopping centre is under the control of council, an enhancement project can be undertaken to achieve a distinct identity that tries to ensure that the centre remains commercially viable. There is also an opportunity to develop Kamo Village as a distinct commercial hub. Mainstreet Programme, as well as re-zoning of new commercial and higher density residential areas, will allow for this.

Given the relative closeness of Whangarei City, it is envisioned that Kamo Village will be a suburban node, with a shopping centre complementary to the city.

6.3.4 Kamo Village
Kamo Village has a relatively large commercial area where almost all land is fully developed and utilised. There are about one hundred retail outlets and light industrial sites at Kamo, although there are no large retail shops in the area. The Village will be a mixed use centre for the Kamo community where residential, commercial, employment and civic uses are present. The intent is that a high quality of urban design will achieve the maximum possible integration of uses and activities connected to the surrounding community fabric and the transit system. The Village will be compact and walkable, with inviting streets and public spaces for community events.

Based on this concept, the Structure Plan suggested extending the commercial area at Kamo by incorporating land immediately to the west and eastern sides of Kamo Road, north of the Village centre.

\(^3\) This figure is based on the population projection from Structure Plan studies. Figures detail can be found in the report – *Whangarei District Growth model, 2008.*
Some of this land, although still zoned for residential activities, is already used for commercial activities, e.g. the fire station, Northlaw and the Kamo Club on Lilian Street and Meldrum Street respectively. This rezoning will provide for a sizable block of land that can allow for the establishment of retail outlets within walking distance of a high density residential area. This is considered to be appropriate as it will ease pressure on roads leading to the town centre when residents do their shopping locally.

![The annual Kamo Christmas Parade taking place in the village.](image)

### 6.3.2 Higher Density Residential Development

The Structure Plan encourages the higher densities in the most sustainable locations and the greatest intensity of development should occur at places with good transport accessibility. The area around the expanded Kamo shopping centre is considered to be the area where potential exists for higher density residential development.

This infill development is intended to make use of the existing infrastructure and provide for high density residential redevelopment within walking distance of services, and thereby reducing dependency on vehicles. With greater travel options available and fewer people travelling by car, more destinations become accessible to non-drivers. More people walking also means more possibilities for social interaction, added economic vibrancy and vitality and support for many businesses in the Kamo Village.

Such development, however, has been tried in other cities, but not in Whangarei. Numerous poor examples of terraced houses and medium density housing developments highlight many of the potential pitfalls of higher density living. Even if the design does provide plenty of privacy, storage and sound insulation and the neighbourhood provides for walking, public spaces and mixed uses, concerns remain to be addressed. Therefore, it would be sensible to trial some of these developments and concentrate on specific areas for controlled development to determine the right balance and ensure the infrastructure and services needed to sustain communities are provided as desired.
6.3.3 The Mainstreet Programme

Kamo is a suburban node, with a shopping centre complementary to the city. It is important to ensure the continuing economic viability of Kamo shopping centre. Its Mainstreet Programme is one element of the dynamic community and economic development strategies between council and the community. The Programme was developed in 2005 and the work, along Kamo Road, consist of removing and replacing existing kerb, channel and footpaths, installing new street furniture, constructing brick planters, brick edging and traffic bollards. The success of the Mainstreet Programme will enhance the physical environment (e.g. creating an inviting atmosphere through window displays, parking areas, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping), heritage conservation, business creation and development, and increase employment and local business investment. The Programme will also help in identifying and reinforcing the unique identity of Kamo and to promote that identity as part of the district’s development.

6.4 Tikipunga

6.4.1 Heritage Character and Growth Pattern

Tikipunga was originally developed by European settlers as a farming district, but since the Second World War has developed into a thriving suburb of Whangarei and now contains busy commercial shopping centres, primary and secondary schools.

The nearby neighbourhood, Glenbervie, has always been a farming and fruit growing area, with Huanui Orchards as one of the early orchards still thriving in the area. Parts of the Glenbervie area are characterised by historic stone walls. These walls were made from volcanic rock that was collected and cleared from the land to allow for farming, with the earliest walls dating back to 1850. These stone walls still strengthen and define the distinct landscape patterns of the area.

The Whangarei Falls area divides Tikipunga and Glenbervie. This area was settled and developed as another farming and market gardening district. Today, the Whangarei Falls are a popular tourist attraction, with walkways allowing visitors to view the Falls from different vantage points.

6.4.2 Tikipunga Overall Role and Function

In 2006 the population of Tikipunga was 7,470 people. The majority of people reside in the residential areas around Tikipunga. However, there is a growing number of people living in the more rural areas of Vinegar Hill, Whareora and Glenbervie.

The area’s distinctiveness is surrounded by the strong, natural rural landscape. This is particularly so for the more rural Glenbervie area, where the gently undulating countryside is characterised by historic stone walls and patches of bush.

Tikipunga contains a range of residential, recreational, commercial and rural land uses. There are two retail centres in Tikipunga; a medium-sized complex at Paramount Parade (which includes the Countdown supermarket) and a smaller group of shops at the Kiripaka Road roundabout. These two sets of shops are
relatively close to Whangarei City and serve as suburban nodes that complement the city. Other individual shops, such as service stations and dairies are also located in the area.

There is a community centre and a library in Tikipunga, along with a number of sports clubs. Two medical centres are situated in the area, one on Paramount Parade and the other on Kiripaka Road. An orphanage, a hospice, and a community adult day care centre are also present.

6.4.3 Urban Issues
The suburb is in close proximity to the Whangarei City. However, there is insufficient affordable housing and associated facilities (transport and conveniences) for the disabled, the lower income residents and the older generation.

There is a need for a community/civic facilities’ centre in the Tikipunga urban area as a local meeting place for the community. The current space available is the small library. With this in mind, the opportunity to develop the Tikipunga urban area as a distinct commercial hub becomes more evident. Defining existing commercial areas, as well as re-zoning new commercial and possibly higher density residential areas, could provide for necessary development. In this case, consideration should be given to multifunctional facilities for quality recreation, leisure and cultural events.

6.4.4 Higher Density Housing Developments and Mixed Use
Given the suburb’s close proximity to the inner city, with the community facilities and public transportation in place, there is opportunity to redevelop large vacant lots and offer higher density housing opportunities clustered around the existing shopping centre, and offer a mix of housing possibilities to its residents. The Tikipunga centre should create an environment which encourages social interaction from which grows a sense of community, the building of an identity that will spur group actions which further define the community.

One such area, in close proximity to nearby residential and commercial development and with a high ability to absorb change, is the area of land west of Corks Road in a continuous square area, crossing over Paramount Parade and ending at the boundary edge of the golf course area, currently zoned as Living 1. With its prime location and attractive adornment of scattered bush and groups of trees, this area is suitable for a higher density of residential development surrounding the retail centre of Tikipunga. The advantages of such development are that it will not only increase the choice of housing available, but will bring further activity and vibrancy into the community. It broadens economic activity and makes a safer environment by enabling both day and night activity.

Figure 19. Tikipunga commercial area (Pink) and potential high density residential development (dark blue).
that maximises Tikipunga as a place to live, work and play, while also promoting the sustainable and efficient use of infrastructure, public transport, community facilities and the existing buildings and physical resources of the business centre.

6.4.5 Create a Recreation Hub
The area of Tikipunga, Glenbervie and Vinegar Hill contains quite a number of scenic walks and reserves, including the AH Reed Reserve and Whangarei Falls. Small neighbourhood parks are dotted among the residential areas throughout the study area. There are also playing grounds within the area that service the sports clubs and provide for club activities such as cricket, rugby, soccer, touch rugby and five-aside soccer. The Whangarei Golf Club also has open space characteristics and serves a recreation need, but this facility is a private commercial business.

There is a need to encourage and facilitate greater use of all public lands and parks for walking and other health-related activities. Preferably, that would be achieved by creating and linking pathways in and between these parks, providing residents with sufficient trails, cycleways and walkways for their various needs.

6.4.6 Public Transport, Walking and Cycling Opportunities
Given the proximity of Tikipunga to central Whangarei, it is possible to shift from driving to public transport, walking and cycling. This shift will reduce traffic volumes, speed, congestion on the road and pressure on parking facilities, as well as lessening environmental impacts. It also increases community liveability and improves public health outcomes.

In order to achieve transport mode change, it is important to provide well-connected network of neighbourhood streets which encourage walking and cycling. People are generally willing to walk or cycle a limited distance to reach a destination, and a relatively well-connected network of streets allows a greater range of destinations to be within comfortable walking or cycling distance from any point in the neighbourhood. (Ministry for the Environment, 2005, p. 27).

In terms of public transport, the Whangarei City bus route includes regular buses to and from the city to Tikipunga. Given rising fuel costs and residential growth increase, the need for better public transportation being available to Tikipunga will increase, particularly among the disabled and the older generation. It is necessary to expand these routes to cater for the needs of the community.
6.5 Onerahi

6.5.1 Heritage Character and Growth Pattern

The Whangarei Harbour was recognised as being rich in natural resources and indeed a place of plenty. Evidence of the settlement of the Whangarei Harbour can be seen in the remains of numerous terraces of ancient Pa. Identified Maori heritage sites illustrate the heritage and cultural values of the wider Onerahi area.

During the 1800s, the Onerahi-Waikaraka-Tamaterau area yielded a large amount of kauri gum and native timber. Settlers dammed the creeks and floated logs down to the harbour from where they were shipped to mills as far away as Auckland for processing. Onerahi, itself, was a gum field and many people made their living from digging valuable gum out of the ground, polishing it and selling it to the dealers in Whangarei and Auckland.

From the 1890s onwards, Onerahi grew rapidly, mainly because of the development of the Limestone Cement Works on Limestone Island and the fact that many of the workers boarded in Onerahi.

In 1938, work began on an airfield on the Onerahi peninsula. Houses that were in the way of construction were relocated along Handforth Street and elsewhere. During World War II, the airfield was used for war purposes. During the 1950s the first subdivisions were developed along Sherwood Rise, and the commercial area grew. In 1957, Onerahi was amalgamated with Whangarei Borough Council.

Today, Onerahi is a flourishing harbourside suburb of Whangarei with a village-like atmosphere and positive community; a peninsula surrounded by water 8kms from the city centre, along Riverside Drive on the harbour’s northern shore.

6.5.2 Onerahi Overall Role and Function

Onerahi township is a service centre through which traffic to Parua Bay and Whangarei Heads passes, leading into the wide range of rural, coastal and marine experiences along Whangarei’s eastern seaboard.

From the commercial airport at Onerahi, the road leads briefly along the ridged backbone of the peninsula through the residential village, before descending on the short stretch into Whangarei City through pastoral scenery backed by lush forest and the extensive marine facilities which make its port such a popular destination for overseas boaties.

Onerahi is a significant centre for many residents in areas served by the Whangarei Heads Road. It has an opportunity to become a better shopping, schooling, social, services and transport hub that invites people of the extended north shore of the harbour to patronise it for its services and character, and for city dwellers to enjoy a nearby destination for seaside activity. Capitalising on these advantages now, will ensure the vitality and viability of the village for the future.
6.5.3 Onerahi Village Hub

Five and a half thousand people call Onerahi home. It is a community of its own, yet close enough to be part of all that Whangarei City provides. The hub of the community clusters around two adjacent junctions: where Whangarei Heads Road meets Church Street and Onerahi Road and the nearby junction of Cartwright Road and Raumati Crescent with Onerahi Road. The village centre has an array of good shops, a supermarket, library, police station, extensive medical centre, post shop and Kiwibank, two schools, numerous recreational facilities, and parks and so on.

Given its significance to the Onerahi community and dwellers along the north shore of the harbour, it is important to develop and enhance the seaside suburb theme in a sustainable way. The commercial hub is not without its challenges, particularly with regard to future expansion of the hub and a perceived lack of parking.

In a recent survey conducted by the Onerahi Focus Group and Whangarei District Council (Onerahi Community Association Inc., 2009), one of the questions asked was what new developments would the residents like to see in the future. The result shows the new developments respondents wished to see were an expanded shopping centre, an extra supermarket, a retirement village and a range of new community facilities. There was a clear desire for expanded services, especially a petrol station and improved supermarket options from the survey results.

6.5.4 Transport and Parking

Onerahi cherishes the complementary tension of being a village geographically distinct from Whangarei City, while also being in near proximity to benefit from the city’s facilities for employment, shopping and services, high schools, and social amenities. This highlights the complexities of Onerahi’s transport arrangements.

The present parking arrangement in and around the village is not considered to be adequate. The bus stop located within the shop front parking area is currently affecting both locals and people passing through the village. The parking area acts as a barrier between shops and road also affects amenity values. It also results in potential for conflict between pedestrians and vehicles due to people having to cross the traffic lanes to and from the majority of the existing parking spaces.

It was suggested by the Onerahi Focus Group that there was opportunity for a much improved arrangement within, or adjacent to, the extended hub. There could also be an opportunity to offer a parking centre in Onerahi, linked to a shuttle bus into the city, especially for traffic from Whangarei Heads. If Onerahi’s
shopping, schooling, and social amenity infrastructure is improved, there could be gains for commuters from Whangarei Heads and for Onerahi businesses, as well as some relief of parking congestion in the city.

In response to the identified issues and suggestions, an additional parking area has been created in Commins Road in front of the recent library extension, as part of the recent Onerahi Shopping Centre upgrade⁴. A pedestrian crossing platform across the carpark is under construction and parking bays are being changed to angle parking on both sides of the parking area. Anti-parking rails will be installed outside the shops at the ends of the carpark.

6.5.5 Higher Density Residential Development
Similar to Kamo and Tikipunga, the Onerahi Structure Plan proposed to create a higher density residential development across the road from the village hub that is currently called 'the Green'. The advantages of such development will increase the choice of housing available and bring further activity and vibrancy into the area. It broadens the area’s economic base and makes it a safer environment by enabling day and night activity that maximises Onerahi as a place to live, work and play, while promoting the sustainable and efficient use of infrastructure, public transport, community facilities and existing buildings and physical resources of the business centre.

6.5.6 Open Space
Sherwood Park is an open space, which is a treasure in the Onerahi community. It affords fine sea views and is nicely located in its proximity to the village hub and schools. The park presently has informal recreational facilities for children and teenagers (i.e. playground and skateboard park). However, it is relatively empty considering its size and the facilities provided. The Onerahi community wishes for additional outdoor opportunity for informal gatherings for its adult residents and feels strongly that developing Sherwood Park for all-age enjoyment and informal social interaction is highly desirable. Creative planning could develop Sherwood Park with parking, viewing and seating areas, paths or walkways, and seasonal outdoor catering.

6.5.7 Walking and Cycling Opportunities
Given the convenient location of Onerahi to central Whangarei, it is possible to shift from driving to walking and cycling. This will reduce traffic volumes, speed, congestion on the road and pressure on parking facilities, as well as creating more positive environmental impacts, increased community liveability and improved public health outcomes. It is viewed as necessary to make walking and cycling more enjoyable and convenient by improvements to walkways and cycleways that connect Onerahi to central Whangarei and beyond. For example, the trip between Onerahi and Whangarei passes through a range of residential, pastoral and marine environments, and the existing cycle routes travel along Riverside Drive to Awaroa River.

⁴ The project is a collaboration between the Onerahi Focus Group and the Whangarei District Council. The community strongly supported a theme that reflected the legend of Onerahi and the suburb’s seaside connection.
Road, can be enhanced and extended to offer interesting walking and cycling opportunities for the communities.

Transportation choices can be expanded by providing more sidewalks, trails, and bike paths that can create a network of non-motorised transportation options within and between neighbourhoods to allow residents to increase their physical activity close to home. Communities can also foster healthy lifestyles by considering walkable, mixed use development and instituting traffic-calming to slow down traffic and make walking and biking more desirable.

6.5.8 Future Actions
As Onerahi grows, the lack of facilities becomes more apparent, resulting in the need for liaison with the community as to how to address these needs. With this in mind, the opportunity to develop the Onerahi urban area as a distinct commercial hub becomes more evident. Defining existing commercial areas, as well as re-zoning new commercial and possibly higher density residential areas, could provide for necessary allowances. Consideration should also be given to multifunctional facilities for quality recreation, leisure and cultural events.

6.6 Maunu/Horahora
6.6.1 Historic Character and Growth Pattern
Maunu and Horahora are suburbs of Whangarei, with high density residential living closer to Whangarei city and rural residential and rural living further out towards Maungatapere. The Maunu area is characterised by stone walls. These walls were made from volcanic rocks that were collected and cleared from the land to allow farming, with the earliest walls dating back to 1850. Many of these stone walls were built by the Dalmatians during World War I and the Depression, when work ran out on the gum fields.

Maunu is boarded to the north by a number of reserves including the Millington Road Reserve, Pukenui Forest Park, Water Supply Reserve and the Coronation Reserve.

6.6.2 Maunu/Horahora Overall Role and Function
Maunu is a popular suburb for residential living. In 2006, the area had a population of approximately 4,749 people and contained a range of residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and rural land uses.

There are two retail areas in Maunu, a reasonably sized group of seven shops at the corner of Westend Avenue and Maunu Road, and a smaller group of shops at the corner of Tui Crescent and Maunu Road, which has three shops. These two sets of shops are relatively close to Whangarei City, and it is proposed that they become suburban nodes which will be complementary to the city.

There is the Museum and Heritage Park, Barge showgrounds which hosts the Whangarei Riding Therapy Centre and the Maunu Pony Club, A & P Show and the Christmas in the Park event. The Hora Hora Rugby
Union Football Club and the Sherwood Park Golf Club are also in this area. There are also several places of worship in the study area.

There are several Marae that provide for meeting places for Tangata Whenua including the central Whangarei Marae, Terenga Paraoa Marae.

There is only one medical centre in the area, but the Whangarei Hospital is also in the study area. There are several retirement villages and veterinarians located in the study area.

Maunu is the centre servicing the rapid growing rural residential area further along the State Highway 14.

6.6.3 Urban Issues
The Maunu area has a number of unique and special features. As the area develops, it is important that these features are protected. Such feature include geological features such as volcanic cones, historical and cultural features like stone walls, the museum, Barge Showgrounds and natural features such as existing native bush. As the area is popular for rural residential development, there is the potential for loss of rural character and economic sustainability of farming units. By setting a boundary to rural residential development, rural character and farming units of sufficient economic size can be retained.

Due to the geographical location of Whangarei City, many part of the town are isolated and have no direct link. This is true for Maunu which was developed in a linear type settlement along a highway with physical barriers of hills on the north and south. This means that access to other parts is limited and is only possible via Maunu Road. Over the years the existing Tui Crescent shops did not grow to match the rapid residential and lifestyle development in this area. As a result the increased population continues to commute for work and shopping in other parts of the town.

The population of Maunu is projected to increase steadily in the coming years. The area is desirable with high value residential and lifestyle development rapidly taking shape. The estimated retail space requirement for a single person is about 3 – 4 square metres of retail space. For an estimated population of 5,000, this means the commercial area of about 2ha excluding parking provisions is required to adequately service the area. Parking spaces takes roughly a third of the gross floor area of retail activities. This means that for this area, a total of about 2.5 – 3ha will be required to adequately cater for the current population.

From a long term planning perspective, taking into account the population size, the size of the existing shops, there is an opportunity to develop a commercial hub for the future growth of the area.

6.6.4 Commercial Hub
A resource consent has been approved for what is to be known as “Maunu Village” commercial development. This proposal is to redevelop an existing garden centre to the west of Tui Crescent Shops into a neighbourhood retail, office and service centre, as well as establishing a café/restaurant and a childcare
centre. The development will provide a ‘hub’ to allow for social interaction, and therefore potentially improve the social and cultural wellbeing of the populace of Maunu, and those who may wish to visit the site from other suburbs.

6.7 Otaika/Raumunga

6.7.1 Historic Pattern and Growth Pattern

Land in and around Otaika and Raumanga was bought by various pioneer settlers and the area was mainly farmland back in the early years. In the early 1960s as the other areas to the north of the city became heavily suburbanised the southern areas close to the city became increasingly desirable. Part of this growth emerges as an extension to the primary arterial route of State Highway 1 running on its north/south transit of the city. Hanging off this fundamentally important infrastructural route the city has emerged as the rail network has retrenched.

Raumanga Valley was very swampy and required extensive drainage and stormwater works to be undertaken before it could become residential. The residential development in Raumanga Valley area continued into the 1970s and across the State Highway with Tennyson Street and Collingwood Street area being developed. State housing was also built further down the State Highway in the area locals now refer to as Smeatons rather than Raumanga. Subdivisions continue to occur on a regular basis in the area, but...
they are now on a much smaller scale than occurred during the sixties and seventies, recently a gated community was created off Tauroa Street in the Smeatons area, one of the few in the Whangarei area.

6.7.2 Otaika/Raumunga Overall Roll and Function
The 2006 population of the area was 5,088. The area has shown significant population growth since 1966. The landscapes of the area have important amenity values and contain areas of visual and ecological significance. Parts of the area are identified to be sensitive environments, such as high value landscapes and natural hazards. General speaking, the topography of the area allows opportunities for residential and commercial/industrial development.

6.7.3 Urban Issues
Otaika/Raumanga area has important amenity values and contains areas of visual and ecological significance. To the west it is bounded by the uplands associated with Otaika Valley, and to the east by the mangroves and mud flats of the Whangarei Harbour. The northern portion of the area comprises mixed residential, retail and industrial development, whilst the southern portion is largely rural in character. Overall, the area is characterised as a modified agricultural, residential and commercial landscape and has been largely cleared of native bush.

The following issues have been identified from previous community consultation for Otaika/Raumanga area:

- Improved road linkages around the Raumanga and Otaika areas are needed. This can be achieved by completing the indicative roading network, and by identifying other indicative roads that can be added. Such roads could include a link between Maunu, and Raumanga and Otaika.

- Improved pedestrian and traffic safety is also an issue, especially around the schools in the area. To help address issues around schools, ‘School Zones’ could be implemented for the Raumanga Primary and Middle School and Northland Polytechnic. Traffic management and traffic calming (including pedestrian crossing sites) will also require investigation around the Otaika shops and Gull Service Station/Bunnings/Harvey Norman intersection areas.

- Issues concerning the State Highway include safety of accesses on and off the State Highway for existing users and any new developments, appropriate speed limits and traffic flow (number of lanes). Transit NZ is undertaking a study on the State Highway south of the city, which may address some of these issues. However, this study does not include the length of the State Highway that extends from the 50km point northward. Issues in this area will also need to be raised with Transit NZ.

- Given the growth in rural residential-type development around the Toe Toe area, the potential exists for loss of both rural character and economic sustainability of farming units. By setting a boundary to rural residential development, rural character and farming units of sufficient economic size can be retained.

- As previously classified rural areas develop through rural residential-type development, the level of services provided needs to be re-evaluated. Recognition of a rural residential zone will help
to establish the appropriate service levels required, for example, the provision of footpaths, safe and efficient speed limits and parks.

- The study area also has a number of unique and special features, including historical and cultural features and natural features such as the views of the Whangarei harbour and Mount Manaia, and existing native bush. As the area develops, it is important that these features are protected. The views of the Whangarei harbour have been identified as requiring particular consideration as they characterise the entranceway to Whangarei as the city is developed.

- The study area includes Raumanga Falls, Tarewa Park and a number of important stream corridors. The careful management of these areas is important as the potential exists for impacts on these important natural environments from adjacent or nearby development. The potential of these areas for recreation also needs to be maximised. At Tarewa Park, in particular, many issues have been identified through consultation as requiring attention, with a Management Plan being prepared.

- The need for pedestrian and cycle links was also raised as an issue. Investigations are required regarding forming a network of walkway and cycleways that link attractions in the study area and link to other suburbs and Whangarei City.

- There is an opportunity to develop the Otaika/Raumanga urban area as a distinct commercial hub. Defining existing commercial areas, as well as re-zoning new commercial and possible higher density residential areas, will allow for this.

- There is also the potential for further industrial land to be provided in the study area. However, the siting of this land, and the development controls applying to it, must be carefully managed to avoid adverse effects on neighbouring properties.

- Another issue raised by the public is reverse sensitivity. The study area has existing industrial land uses and a major quarry, and therefore any rezoning in the vicinity of these will need to take into account the possible reverse sensitivity effects of the new land uses on these existing land uses.

6.7.4 Create a Distinctive ‘Entranceway’

Entranceways, which can be viewed as the ‘front doors’ into a community, provide the first impressions of the community. The entranceway can either express a community’s pride and sense of place or can give the community a poor public image.

Otaika Road/State Highway 1 (SH1) is the main entranceway corridor into Whangarei City from the south. Based on input received at the

Figure 23. Whangarei i-site on the entranceway to Whangarei.
neighbourhood workshops, there is a lot of support for maintaining and enhancing the appearance of the entranceway into Whangarei City. It is also a project in the Structure Plan to create and maintain an attractive entrance to the city so as to create a ‘sense of arrival’ to the visitor.

Development of an attractive entranceway into Whangarei should include landscaping and lighting with appropriate signage. For example, landscaped beds in some locations along the corridor can be created; and, the lookout area on SH1 can be upgraded with benches and even brick crosswalks to take advantage of the views of the harbour and open space (i.e. the Otaika Reserve). Street lighting similar to Otaika and the CBD could also be considered along major corridors as the area develops, which could help tie the community together visually.

6.7.5 Protection of Heritage Open Space
Raumanga particularly is rich in one of Whangarei’s greatest asset: its greenbelt. The valleys to its south-western and western fringes are significant and particularly distinctive and growth within this belt must be avoided. The protection and enhancement of the greenbelt must form a key part in the city’s future growth strategy. There is opportunity to enhance the existing network of walkways into comprehensive and intelligently planned connections between open spaces (Archifact Ltd, 2005).
7 MARSDEN POINT/ RUAKAKA SATELLITE TOWN

7.1 Heritage Character and Growth Pattern

The Marsden Point/Ruakaka area was traditionally a rural area with limited coastal residential settlement. The history of the area and its immediate surrounds is described below in terms of three distinct eras. These are:

- The period of pre-European settlement, prior to about 1800, when the area was settled by Maori.
- The long period, between the early 1800s and the 1960s, when a mainly extractive/rural economy prevailed. A wharf developed at Marsden Point for import/export functions, and the coastal townships were established.
- From 1965 to the present, during which period the coastal residential townships grew progressively, and Marsden Point’s development as an industrial node was established.

From the mid 1800s the Crown made 40 acre blocks of land available to settler immigrants for agricultural purposes. Dairy farms and fruit growing became important occupations from about 1880 to the 1920s.

Marsden Point became a convenient place to load and unload the mail, passengers, and goods for Waipu and the Whangarei Heads, and soon became the centre of commerce for the area. Marsden Town, a small port settlement was established on Marsden Point in the early 1800s. In the early 1920s a wharf was constructed at One Tree Point and the road to One Tree point was completed in 1931. This subsequently led to a few of the original settler blocks on the seaside being subdivided into a small township. Ruakaka Township had a similar genesis to One Tree Point, but was subdivided much later in the mid 1900s.

By 1960 the area had reverted to a mainly rural economy, with little use of the Marsden Point wharf. Two small isolated coastal settlements afforded largely holiday and recreation lifestyles. In 1960 an oil refinery was built at Marsden Point, due to its ideal harbourage, low seismic risk, and ideal topography.

In 1965 construction of the Marsden ‘A’ Power Station commenced and the station was commissioned in 1967. The adjacent Marsden village was established during this period. Some ten years later construction of the Marsden ‘B’ Power Station began and Marsden Village expanded.

Most recently, in 1999, the Northland Port Corporation developed and operated a deep water port at Marsden Point. Carter Holt Harvey also constructed a Laminated Veneer Lumber plant at Marsden Point.

Figure 24. Marsden Point Oil Refinery.
Socio-economic impacts of major industrial projects (such as the oil refinery, and power stations) played a major part in shaping the local communities, and the introduction of major new industry is likely to create further socio-economic dynamics for the people in this area.

Today, the Marsden Point/Ruakaka area has undergone significant change. The area is not just about industrial activity, port facilities, oil refinery; it is also the place for high quality coastal residential neighbourhoods, recreational opportunities and farming. With approximately 130 identified Maori heritage sites, the area has great historical, cultural, spiritual and wahi tapu value. The Takahiwai Marae is a centre of present day local Maori, and Patuharakeke remain customary custodians of the surrounding land, sea and resources.

The area has important strategic potential and a high prospect for growth that can occur without compromising the quality of life, if appropriate measures are taken for such growth.

7.2 Urban Planning Issues
Marsden Point/Ruakaka is currently home to some 3,400 people. The population growth rate over the past decade has averaged around 2% per annum, with a tendency to a slightly higher than average annual rate in the more recent years. With the coastal recreation and residential demands of a larger Auckland metropolitan population, and the relative attractiveness of the area’s coastline to Auckland's decentralising population and as a vocation destination, it is likely this to be a significant growth factor in the future with respect to land uptake and utilisation. In addition, with an increased future local employment base there will be a change over time to a more balanced urban population profile, shifting from mostly part-time residency and retirees to more permanent residency and worker families, along with a concomitant change in community functions and activities.

The Council recognised the significant growth in this area and started the Marsden Point/Ruakaka structure plan study back in 2000. Since that planning exercise there has been considerable development in the area, including; the expansion of the Port, the construction of the Port Marsden Highway port access route, the staging development of Marsden Cove marina, and numerous industrial and residential subdivisions (Whangarei District Council, 2009). An updated Marsden Point/Ruakaka structure plan has been adopted by Council that seeks to manage industrial and residential growth in the area over the immediate to long term (Marsden Point/Ruakaka Structure Plan 2008).

Growth will be influenced by supply factors. For example, the rate of growth will depend on the capacity of infrastructure, the nature and cost of land, and the quality of the urban environment. While growth at Marsden Point/Ruakaka area has been modest, the potential for substantial long term growth is substantial, as is the capacity to accommodate it. Constraints on sewage treatment and disposal have effectively stalled growth recently, but wider accelerating local development and marketing reveal a widely-held expectation that when this constraint is removed, growth will accelerate (Phil McDermott Consultants Ltd, 2008, p.1).
The key urban form and design issues facing the Marsden Point/Ruakaka area including the following:

- The relative attractiveness of the area as a regional industrial location and also as a commuter location relative to Whangarei will increase in the future, especially and increasingly as a critical mass of local development establishes.
- The current industrial and residential land uses are spread across the area, for the most in relatively isolated, low density and uni-functional activity concentrations. This results in a generally poor overall urban form regarding aspects such as connectivity, activity mix, and range of activities.
- There is a limited range of residential opportunities/options, with the nature of current residential development (i.e. almost exclusively single residential medium density housing) largely based on the historical target market and demand for second homes and retirement living.
- Residential areas which comprise relatively bland traditional suburban environments, having a low level of urban activity mix, and in terms of design, have a low capability to absorb other residentially-based urban land use activities and be more diverse in the future.
- The open space system of local reserves and walkways is not well developed and does not function optimally as an integrated network.
- In order to protect higher value landscape features and ecologically sensitive areas from being gradually eroded by incremental mass urban development, it is appropriate and necessary to plan for the ultimate spatial extent of urban development, and define and establish strong and permanent urban edges.

### 7.3 Urban Design

The Marsden Point/Ruakaka area has a significant opportunity to be developed as a healthy, safe and attractive place where business, social and cultural life can flourish. However, planning and urban design principles are essential to the envisioning and implementation of such development. These will guide the
delivery of a visually appealing, comfortable and secure physical environment that will, in turn, create economic confidence in a place leading to long term investment within the community.

The vision of the Marsden Point/Ruakaka area is to be a sustainable town centre that offers:

- Diverse residential accommodation;
- Well connected to open space networks;
- Mixed in use;
- Transport orientated; and
- Walkable, efficient, accessible and safe environment.

The area will be directly attributed to the quality of its public realm including streets, boulevards, parks, squares, plazas, open spaces and natural landscape. A well designed and well managed public realm will contribute to community pride and identity for the Marsden Point/Ruakaka area, in conjunction with strong and diversified employment opportunities.

The following sections describe what urban design principles can be incorporated into planning a sustainable town centre in Marsden Point/Ruakaka area.

### 7.3.1 Sustainability

At Marsden Point/Ruakaka the opportunity exists to create a holistic urban development that exhibits social, cultural, economic, governance, and environmental sustainability.

In doing so, one of the most important components of creating a sustainable town is to identify and promote development of a primary mixed use centre in Marsden Point. The primary centre can integrate a hierarchy of density, diversity of residents, and a mix of uses, within a well connected and coherent public transport, walking and cycling network. The public spaces and buildings are to be well designed, with all components of the primary centre can be environmentally responsive.

Associated with this would be the institution of a buffer zone between the heavy industrial areas located in the north eastern sector of the area near the Port, and future residential areas. This buffer area could comprise both open space buffers and light/service industrial areas (which are more compatible with residential functions).

The previously unoccupied agricultural land in the area can be transformed to a mixed use quarter which exploits its relationship to the proposed railway link and existing areas. With an integrated transport system, it will help to minimise the reliance on private vehicles and reinforce connections with the town centre. Prior to the establishment of the rail link, the bus network will be central to town centre access and will provide connections to the Port, One Tree Point, and Ruakaka. Local buses will also link the town centre to adjacent communities including the town centre residential neighbourhood.
7.3.2 Marsden Primary Centre – Mixed Used Development

The intention for land uses within the Primary Centre is to provide a diverse, vibrant and sustainable mix of activities that can extend the daily activation of the place. It will have a commercial component, a traffic/transport component (connector roads and the railway), offices, high density residential, service industry, open and public/civic spaces and even institutional uses. Commercial activities will include general retailing, supermarkets, restaurants, offices, visitor accommodation, entertainment and a leisure complex. The consolidation of these uses will contribute to an identifiable Primary Centre core to provide the community and commercial focus for the area. The Primary Centre can be planned as a generally compact urban development, with a medium-rise building form. Ground floor activities would primarily relate to retailing, commercial and community/civic functions, with upper levels comprise other commercial and office functions, and a limited residential component.

The main street of the Primary Centre will become the primary address for the town centre and be activated by a range of holistic mixed use developments, such as retail, restaurants, cafes, offices, civic/community, recreation/culture, and some residential activities. These mixed use developments will then enhance walking, cycling, general health and job opportunities.

There is an opportunity to provide more formal urban public spaces in the Primary Centre area. These areas would be the gathering space for the community. In this way, the public spaces will strengthen the sense of space and lift up the energy of Marsden Point/Ruakaka’s communities.
7.3.3 Local Centres
Apart from the Marsden Primary Centre described above, two local centres are already suitably located in the Marsden Point/Ruakaka area; one being the existing centre at Ruakaka, and the other one being the existing/proposed extended centre at One Tree Point residential area. The existing Ruakaka centre has the added advantage of having the capacity to expand.

The scale of these centres is planned so that they serve as local community focal points and contain smaller footprint retail, medium-sized supermarket, commercial and other more locally orientated community services and facilities.

7.3.4 Residential Areas Beautification
Marsden Point/Ruakaka’s identity needs to be strengthened and enhanced to promote the positive characteristics of the community. Strengthening this area’s identity is one step toward improving the community’s appearance and overall quality of life. One of the most effective ways to improve a community’s identity, or image, is to build upon what makes the community, or region, unique. For example, by incorporating the characteristics of Marsden Point/Ruakaka’s residential areas into the design of new residential development the neighbourhood appearance is enhanced by the diversity and style of buildings. This also can include a variety of housing types and densities, girded street patterns, boulevards, well designed streetscape. What is special about the community will be incorporate throughout the area, and will help set it apart from other communities in the district.

Some of the urban design ideas that can be incorporated in the residential areas, especially the composite One Tree Point and Ruakaka West areas where the land is flat, include:

- Residential boulevards – Pyle Road East can be planned as the main north-south trending boulevard connecting the future Primary Centre to the One Tree Point local centre, and similar boulevards can also be planned in some local parallel roads (namely, part of One Tree Point Road and other north-south roads leading south off McEwan Road).
- Residential greenscape streets – These wide local greenspace streets can be planned throughout the composite One Tree Point residential areas (where they trend east-west) and also in the Ruakaka

Figure 28. Illustrative concept of residential parks.  
West area (where they trend both north-south and east-west). The general characteristic of these greenspace streets is that they will also function as public and/or community spaces with a high level of residential interface frontage, and will include street(s), stormwater management devices (e.g. ponds), local parks, cycle ways and pedestrian paths. These greenspace streets are also ideal locations for being fronted by high density residential development.

Establishing visually unifying landscapes along these residential areas will improve the liveability of Marsden Point/Ruakaka and its environs. It will also enhance the amenity and attractiveness of these areas.

Figure 29. Example of Medium Intensity Residential Area with ‘Greenspace Street’ Corridors.

7.3.5 Open Space Network
The creation of an Open Space Network will be a major initiative for the delivery of Marsden Primary Centre. Landscape and open spaces areas will provide buffer zones to enable appropriate separation between use adjacencies whilst enabling them to be integrated holistically within the network.

To create open space diversity, one of the major green space developments would be the idea of creating a Linear Park or a ‘buffer zone’ in the Primary Centre. The Linear Park will provide the open space focus for the area while providing a green address for commercial activities, and the amenity of a major park for the residential neighbourhoods nearby.

In addition, a number of discrete parks are identified within the Linear Park that relate to adjacent town centre core, residential and community uses. High quality recreational facilities for use by the community, school, and college will be established.

A formal parkland or civic garden will be created in the centre of the Linear Park displaying New Zealand’s endemic landscape. A series of local parks will also be provided in close proximity to the residential neighbourhoods. Each residential park will have a differing character created by varying uses or establishing
contrast through tree and plant selection. The local parks may include playgrounds, community gardens, child care facilities and picnic areas allowing for informal recreational areas. This system will contribute to each residential neighbourhood having its own identity and distinct open space.

### 7.3.6 Transport Corridors

Transportation corridors provide a means for people and goods to travel to, and through, a community, they define the ways in which a community functions, and the visual impression a community leaves with travellers and visitors. The major corridors in Marsden Point/Ruakaka area include:

- Marsden Point Road, connecting State Highway 1 through Ruakaka;
- Port Marsden Highway (SH15A), connecting SH1 in the south to Marsden Point;
- One Tree Point Road;
- Four east-west collector roads link Marsden Point Road with One Tree Point Road, namely: McEwan, McCathie, Salle, and Pyle Roads; and,
- The Ruakaka east and south areas are each served by a single access point off Marsden Point Road.

At present, existing corridors do not promote visual linkage into the community, or convey a strong community image. It is important to note that these major corridors should be promoted as a positive image from the entrance of SH1 entering into Marsden Point/Ruakaka area. For example, the development of a comprehensive streetscape programme including street tree plantings and landscape improvements will assist in the area’s beautification. Transportation corridors in these areas must be linked, and promote, the identity of Marsden Point/Ruakaka. Strengthening these types of urban design components will allow Marsden Point/Ruakaka to maintain a holistic image committed to community development, beautification and environmental preservation.

### 7.3.7 Walkable Communities

The development of a well established pedestrian and cycle network is essential to the success of the Primary Centre core and the rest of Marsden Point/Ruakaka area. Routes will offer a diversity of experience along connected, safe and secure paths and trails.

These cycle and pedestrian paths should be paved and separated from vehicular traffic. This will reduce the risk of conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Recreational routes for leisure cycling or walking will be connected to the regional network through the Linear Park and smaller residential neighbourhood

![Figure 30. Example of landscaping boulevard. Source: Ross Bonthorne Architect & Woods Bagot, 2008.](image-url)
parks to create a diversity of high quality recreation options connected to areas such as Takahiwai Hills or Bream Bay foreshore. There is also an opportunity to create unsealed trails for mountain biking or hiking.

The idea of creating a ‘Main Boulevard’ that links the Primary Centre with the One Tree Point local centre will improve connectivity and ease of access. The ‘Main Boulevard’ is defined as an arterial type road which provides for the safe movement of people using all modes of transport, with a particular emphasis on buses, cycling and walking. A single vehicle lane per direction, cycle lanes and shared cycle/pedestrian paths will provide connectivity with the residential areas along the route, whilst also providing a vibrant environment for users of The Main Boulevard. Intermittent parking and bus bays will be provided through indents into tree-planted berms.

Pedestrian amenity is a key factor for the success of the development as many trips will be made by foot, and most trips made by passenger transport will involve walking to some degree. The provision of good, convenient and safe facilities for pedestrians and cyclists is essential and the emphasis is on simple permeable street and off road layouts that will provide direct access to amenities and passenger transport, with suitable priority, safety and security.

A cycle network for the area should be comprehensive and provide for all different types of users with easy to navigate and safe routes to all areas. Cycle facilities will be provided along the Main Boulevard, connecting the One Tree Point centre through the residential areas to the Primary Centre.

### 7.3.8 Conclusion

The Marsden Point/Ruakaka area will thus not only grow, but is also likely to functionally change from its historical role as mainly rural with isolated industries (i.e. the Port and refinery), to a functionally much broader-based urban area, with significant business, residential, community and civic activities. The creation of Marsden Primary Centre as a sustainable, vibrant and diverse focus for the Marsden Point/Ruakaka area will significantly contribute to the strengthening and continued definition of the area as a whole. Rather than a discrete and independent development, the intention is to identify a Primary Centre core and associated residential community that builds upon and compliments the existing and future development activities in
the entire area. The Primary Centre will be intentionally transport orientated, mixed in use, well connected to open space networks, and diverse in its offering of residential accommodation.

The image of Marsden Primary Centre will be directly attributed to the quality of its public realm including streets, boulevards, parks, plazas, open spaces and natural landscape. A well designed and well managed public realm at the Primary Centre core will contribute to community pride and identity for the Marsden Point/Ruakaka area. In conjunction with strong and diversified employment opportunities, Marsden Point/Ruakaka will attract the development investment required to sustain and enhance the economic, social and environmental centre of the area.

Planning and urban design principles hence are essential to the envisioning and implementation of a successful new Primary Centre. These will guide the delivery of a visually appealing, comfortable and secure physical environment that will, in turn, create economic confidence in a place leading to long term investment within the community.
8 ONE RURAL AND TWO COASTAL GROWTH NODES

8.1 Introduction

The fourth tier settlement pattern is called the ‘one rural and two coastal growth nodes’. It is expected that population in Hikurangi Township will grow to around 5,000 people servicing its rural hinterland and parts of the northern coastal area. Two coastal townships, one at Parua Bay servicing the north harbour, Pataua and Whangarei Heads areas and the second at Waipu, servicing the southern Bream Bay area, will grow up to around 5,000 people in the next 50 years.

This chapter will look at heritage character and growth pattern, urban design, potential development constraints and opportunities in Hikurangi, Waipu Township and Parua Bay.

8.2 Hikurangi

8.2.1 Heritage Character and Growth Pattern

Hikurangi is an iconic heritage area. The protection and enhancement of this area must form a key part in the city’s future urban growth strategy. Much of the Hikurangi Township is linked to the earlier years of Whangarei’s rural and industrial growth rather than its immediate urban development.

Many European settlers arrived in and around the Hikurangi area in 1863. Hikurangi was a coal-mining town from 1890 till the last mine closed in 1948 (Malcolm, 1997). Its early industry also include timber mills and digging for kauri gum. Historically the settlement developed, initially towards the south end of the existing township. It is in this area that a sawmill was constructed to process the timber removed from Hikurangi Mountain and the surrounding area. Later, when mining became the dominant activity locally, the focus of settlement moved to the north end, including Waro and Wilsonville. Hikurangi had about 60 to 70 mines in its heyday. Although little of the mining activity is obvious today (many of the mines closed in the 1920s through to the 1940s), many of the dwellings constructed at this stage for the miners and other workers remain. The Hikurangi Dairy Company also played an important part in the history of the town. The Company was formed in 1904 and operated until it merged with the Northland Co-operative Dairy Company in 1985. Once the new dairy factory was built at Kauri, the Hikurangi dairy factory was no longer needed and the empty buildings took the heart out of the Hikurangi Township.

Today Hikurangi Township still contains particular distinctive heritage themes such as its main street character, old mining cottages and the remaining elements of the old industrial dairy factory, retaining a link with its strong mining heritage. The railway line to the west behind the town and some of the associated structures of earlier industry speak directly of some of the rail heritage character of this place. The collective value of heritage buildings and sites of various periods through the later nineteenth and twentieth century adds to the emergence and enhancement of a distinctive sense of character.

Future development in Hikurangi will involve increasing densification of urban and satellite urban areas due to constraints on urban expansion due to flood hazard. Intensification without clear guidelines threatens heritage areas, character and amenity value and controls must be considered to ensure that assessed values
can be conserved and appropriately enhanced over time. Industrial heritage is an important and distinctive aspect to the historic development of Whangarei and particularly to the development of industry and community in Hikurangi.

The Hikurangi Township main street has the prominent historic Hikurangi Hotel (built in 1880) and clusters of shops. The linear form settlement pattern along the main street reflects the shifting focus during the growth of the township. As a consequence of this linear form the settlement suffers from a lack of connectivity (pedestrian linkage). This may contribute to the continued lack of success of some of the retail premises in the settlement.

8.2.2 Urban Design
At present, there are a number of vacant premises located along the main street in Hikurangi. These establishments indicate what could be a more extensive shopping precinct in the future. There could be some benefit in strengthening the significance of this retail focus, possibly by enhancing the reserve adjacent to the Memorial Hall to create a public space more focused on the road, whilst still retaining its use as a play area.

There is the opportunity to increase the connectivity, and possibly revitalise the central retail area through a Mainstreet Programme.

Connected street systems give people choices. Having roads that are joined together in a network, rather than ending up in cul-de-sacs, makes it easier for all people – children, teenagers, the elderly, as well as other adults – to get around their neighbourhood. This helps integrate communities and overcome isolation.

The benefits of increased connectivity are:
- Facilitation of movement and exchange while spreading traffic loads;
- Making places safer and more alive by bringing activity and passive surveillance to an area;
- Making walking and cycling more enjoyable and convenient;
- Reduction of dependence on motor vehicles; and,
- Helping to ensure traffic and roads do not divide communities.
Ensuring new areas are designed with a high degree of connectivity, and improving connectivity within existing urban areas by adding new links and completing missing links, helps support the concentration of activities and a greater diversity of activities.

The areas zoned for Living 1 Environment, from the beginning of George Street to Boundary Road, are unlikely to mitigate the problems of visual dispersal and poor connectivity since these areas are located at the extreme ends of the settlement. A more positive approach, in urban design terms to addressing the problems described above would be to consolidate development around the existing centre. This facilitates better linkages (connectivity), encourages walking and may assist in benefiting the existing retail activities.

Consolidation is one of the most important steps in helping to revitalise declining centre and bringing life to low-density, single-use areas. It creates critical mass and brings vitality to an area by supporting more business and service activities, greater street life and more movement. Consolidation also:

- Makes walking, cycling and passenger transport more likely;
- Reduces the amount of land consumed by buildings and activities;
- Makes better use of existing infrastructure;
- Can reduce development pressures on areas where intensification is not desirable, such as areas of special character;
- Can help avoid development in areas where there are environmental or infrastructure constraints on development; and,
- Helps improve energy efficiency.

Near the main street/central retail area there are a number of premises engaging in light industrial activities. The most visible of these are located in the old dairy factory which fronts onto King Street. Others are located to the rear, over the rail lines on Factory Lane where they are separated from private residences. These areas zoned Business 2 in the District Plan provides for consolidation of development and appears logical.

It is important to note that development in the above areas and along the whole of the length of King and George Streets must be treated with special care and the area must be read as a unique dialogue between historic built form, heritage open space and greenbelt. This is an iconic heritage area to the distinctive nature of Hikurangi’s settlement and development. The protection and enhancement of this area and its boundaries to further development must form a key part in the city’s future urban growth strategy for Hikurangi.

8.2.3 Conclusion

The Hikurangi area is rich in a distinctive range of historic heritage layers relating to the history and development of the town and its place relative to Whangarei and to places north of the city. It is in part these thematic cues whose potential, as travel, industrial heritage site and a future potential adaptive reuse, should be considered. The works, the quarry and associated structure (including commercial, institutional
and residential) and infrastructure (particularly the railway) must be carefully assessed and their development potential considered in the context of values particular to their association with Hikurangi and its place within greater urban Whangarei (Archifact Ltd, 2005).

8.3 Waipu Township
8.3.1 Heritage Character and Growth Pattern
Waipu village is rich in Scottish Heritage. The great migration of Scottish Highlanders who moved from Nova Scotia to New Zealand in the 1850s is told from the heritage buildings and structures. The Centre is situated at the spot where the five streams join which go to form the Waipu River. Here the first settlers took up their adobe, built their church and school, and so laid the foundation of what became over time a small township (MacDonald, 1928). This spot was also intended to become the heart of the new settlement. The National Bank (former), a post and telegraph-telephone office, a police station and cell block were built around that era and located along Cove Road.

Apart from those buildings mentioned above, many other buildings and objects also tell the fascinating stories of earlier settlers and their life in Waipu. They give an insight to the way things were and how things have evolved over the past one hundred and fifty years. These include:

- Lewis Store – the first main store for Waipu. The store operated predominantly on a book-entry system. Produce, including butter, eggs, fowls and turkeys, were sold at the store for shipment to Auckland on the out-going boats, and necessities were entered against this credit.
- North River School – the original school opened around 1860 and it was erected by parents (Waipu Heritage Centre, 2009).
- The Braigh on Glenmohr Road is an excellent example of early residential architecture.

Currently, the Waipu Township is experiencing modest growth including increased number of retirement population. In spite of that growth, the Waipu Township has maintained its ties to the past, preserving its heritage and its main centre area. One of the significant challenges facing the Waipu Township community is how to preserve the distinctive Scottish heritage and strong sense of place while growth continues.

8.3.2 Urban Design
Council’s Coastal Management Strategy identified the need for a structure plan for Waipu Township⁵ as a means of managing growth in the coastal environment. The structure plan outlined a trend towards more intensive forms of urban settlement clustered around the centre. Given its special heritage value of Waipu Township, particularly focussed on the Nova Scotia history of the area; it is important that, whenever additional growth, development, or redevelopment occurs, those changes add to rather than detract from the character and attractiveness of the coastal community. The distinctive Scottish heritage character of Waipu Township can be preserved and enhanced by a higher level of design, and a good understanding of urban design principles.

⁵ The purpose of Whangarei’s Coastal Management Strategy will be discussed further in Chapter 9 of this report.
Some urban design principles and guidelines could be applied, including:

- Promote tourism and the heritage settlement at Waipu;
- Strengthen the community core;
- Promote a pedestrian friendly settlement; and,
- Maintain the 'sense of place' for Waipu Township.

**Promote Tourism and the Heritage Settlement**

The heritage of Waipu should be recognised as an important part of the community identity. It should enhance heritage status and create a character that would be unique given the background and history of Waipu.

A number of specific heritage features are worthy of protection; these include the old Manse, the museum and the Glebe. There are also a number of features surrounding the museum worth protecting, such as the cemetery, heritage monuments, Coronation Hall, Waihoihoi Park, Johnson Point Reserve and similar. The Glebe was identified as a potential outdoor performance area with possibilities of expanding the Highland Games to include an arts festival. This particular mechanism not only protects the heritage values in Waipu Township, but also offers tourism opportunities for the area. Commercial activities such as cafes, restaurants, homestays in Waipu Township would benefit from such tourism opportunities.

**Strengthen the Community Core**

One of the strengths of Waipu Township is its distinctive Scottish heritage. When people ‘picture’ Waipu, they often have this famous Scottish migration saga in their minds. The fascinating stories of pioneer settlers and their life in Waipu can be traced back from the remaining historic heritage in the Town Centre. The Town Centre serves many functions. Significant public buildings are located there, including the museum, the heritage monuments, the fire department, the library, the school, child care centre, post office, community halls and churches. Locally owned restaurants, stores and other business services complete the mix of uses. The combination of shops, businesses, and religious and civic uses is enhanced with special events such as the Highland Games and weekly Farmers Market. The combination of these elements reinforces the Town Centre’s important role in the community.

The Town Centre, with its street trees, walkways, and sidewalk cafes, is where residents naturally congregate to ‘people watch’, meet friends and neighbours, and enjoy the small town atmosphere. The economic and social vitality in the Town Centre has a positive impact on the entire community. However, the
Town Centre is not without its challenges, particularly with regard to parking around the heritage sites, and through-traffic conflicts at the commercial hub and the community facilities.

A Mainstreet Programme, can be applied to strengthen and revitalise the Town Centre and the commercial hub. Through promotion, the Mainstreet Programme will encourage residents, visitors, and potential investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in Waipu Township. The Programme should ensure enhancement of an inviting atmosphere in the township through attractive streetscapes, building improvements, heritage building enhancement, and parking areas.

Provide a Pedestrian Friendly Settlement
The community have expressed a strong desire for the establishment of a walkable community village in Waipu Township. Specific elements identified to achieve this outcome include:

- Traffic calming and management on Waipu Road through the commercial area;
- A longer term development for an alternative access road around community and commercial facilities;
- Adoption of traffic and parking management strategies to accommodate parking demand and reduce pedestrian and through-traffic conflicts at the Waipu Township commercial hub and the community facilities, including the recreation centre and school;
- Expand reserve and open space network along the river and between heritage features of Waipu; and,
- Provision for cyclists and pedestrians on Waipu Road to provide connectivity between the village and coastal settlements.

Maintain the 'Sense of Place' for Waipu Township
People enjoy a sense of community. Waipu Township offers a sense of place, a compact settlement pattern, and proximity to local services. There are areas within the existing town centre or within the future expandable service area of Waipu Township where additional development can be accommodated. It is imperative that any future development should contribute to, rather than detract from, the small town character of the community and the special heritage of Waipu Township. The following specific elements are identified to achieve maintenance of the ‘sense of place’ for Waipu Township:

- Voluntary design guides to development to promote or support the heritage values of the area, both with respect to Nova Scotian and tangata whenua history; and
- Traffic management in the area to ensure that traffic generated activities do not detract from heritage values of settlement.

8.3.3 Conclusion
Waipu Township has a rich heritage including early Scottish settlement from Nova Scotia. Its heritage features, natural features (e.g. white sandy surf beaches, tranquil rural scenery, native bush, waterfalls and caves), and other key attractions (e.g. horse treks, golf, surf casting, fishing and dive charters and boat hire) are what make Waipu Township unique. These sites and areas have the potential to be an ‘attractor’ for
visitors and eco-tourists. Heritage values have contributed to the community’s sense of place significantly. It is important to maintain and enhance the diversity of values and special character that contribute to the unique sense of place for communities in Waipu Township; and, promote good design that contributes to the amenity of coastal areas and promotes the local sense of place and community identity.

8.4 Parua Bay
8.4.1 Heritage Character and Growth Pattern
Parua Bay lies east of Whangarei Township along Whangarei Heads Road, an area that is rapidly being developed and increasing in population. Parua Bay has been recognized as an important area due to its proximity to the surrounding areas of Ocean Beach, Pataua South, Taiharuru, Waikaraka, Tamaterau, McLeod Bay, Reotahi, Taurikura and Urquharts Bay.

Current development in the area includes a number of small clustered residential living environments around bays and beaches surrounded by largely rural activity. The clustered residential living areas are mainly located along Ritchie Road, which is zoned Living 1 Environment. Kiteone Road is developing in a similar way with new subdivisions slowly appearing. The services in Parua Bay are located along Whangarei Heads Road, adjacent to Lamb Road. These services include a school, petrol station and medical centre. New development has recently occurred here, with a café, liquor store, real estate office and a Four Square store.

Parua Bay is passed through regularly by residents, beach goers and tourists; therefore the area holds great potential to become the ‘hub’ of Whangarei Heads.

8.4.2 Sense of Place
The distinctive landscape features and valued vegetation of the backshore hills and the mangrove estuarine environment of the bay have attributed to the special sense of place of this area. Other specific values are also contributing to the scenic character of Parua Bay, including the low density housing, bush surrounds and vegetation, the maintenance of a reduced speed environment, the rural outlook and the character of housing development.

In this regard, while recognising and providing for local residential demand in the area, it is considered that such development should be managed to recognise these values. Specific elements to achieve maintenance of the sense of place for Parua Bay include:

- Providing for some Living 1 and Living 3 expansion around the settlement areas, retaining and expanding the Coastal Countryside Environments surrounding the settlement, particularly where there are identified vegetation and landscape values;
- Establishing bush protection in subdivision, use and development, recognising the contribution that this bush has to the natural character and sense of place of the area;
- Reserve expansion and viewpoint protection, including setting aside coastal margins and areas of valued bush as part of the reserve network.
- Using topography and natural features to guide boundaries of development;
• Development controls to protect the foreshore from run-off and pollution.

8.4.3 Urban Design
Given the unique location of Parua Bay, it is possible to utilise a number of design elements for enhancing the coastal village. These include mixed use, consolidated development and create a pedestrian friendly settlement.

Mixed Uses in the Village
Parua Bay is a ‘hub’ for the wider Whangarei Heads area. The area provides an important community and service centre, particularly with the school, playschool, sports and recreation facilities and commercial service facilities.

The Parua Village is a mixed use area containing a range of retail, service, office, and potential residential uses. These buildings and small shops have established a small seaside village ‘Main Street’ character for the area. Retail establishments in here serve the convenience shopping needs of residents from the Whangarei Heads area.

The Village should create an environment which encourages social interaction from which grows a sense of community. It must satisfy functional needs, but also raise daily human activity to a level of human interaction. It will have successes in serving its role in the Parua Bay community when it is not just a place to function, but truly a place for people to enjoy the benefits of coastal life. The development of a community centre, which would facilitate and encourage social interaction among the community itself as well as surrounding communities, should be strongly encouraged.

Figure 34. Example of commercial ‘hub’ and density of 500m² lot size.
Clustered Residential Development
The community have expressed a strong desire to maintain the small settlement areas and the associated sense of community and cluster residential settlement, rather than allowing sprawl or ribbon development connecting settlement areas in Parua Bay.

It is envisioned that Parua Bay will evolve, over time, into an attractive pedestrian-oriented coastal village neighbourhood, with clustered residential development and a strong sense of community.

The Living 1 environment will be located at the centre of Parua Bay, providing for residential growth in a concentrated area rather than continued or uncontrolled ‘sprawl’ across the rural areas surrounding Parua Bay. Under utilised and vacant sites will infill, consolidating and revitalising the neighbourhood. This trend to consolidated development will also include much needed community serving uses which will support housing and help to create a sense of neighbourhood for the area. With its pedestrian orientation, residents of Parua Bay will enjoy convenient across to the shopping, the school and sport/recreation facilities offered by the nearby village.

It is expected that some ‘large lot’ residential expansion will be developed on surrounding slopes of Parua Bay, contained within ‘urban limits’ defined largely by existing and future road network. However, given the special sense of place and bush/natural character issues and the potential for such development to impact on ridgelines and view, future ‘large lot’ residential expansion will be carried out in conjunction with vegetation controls and the establishment of design guidelines to address potential adverse impacts on the special character of these areas.

Walkable Community
The enhancement of the streetscape and is an integral component of a comprehensive effort to maximise the development potential of the Parua Bay area as well as its quality of life benefit to its community residents. Making the area an attractive and inviting place to be is one of the important ways for improving the area, and streetscape improvements are an essential element of helping to create a walkable atmosphere and making the area attractive.

Specific elements to achieve the establishment of a special lifestyle encouraging pedestrian friendly settlement include:

- Preserve and develop walkway linkages and walking tracks in the area, including linkages between community and commercial facilities and residential areas;
- Traffic calming measures on Whangarei Heads Road through the commercial area and the Pataua South Road/Whangarei Heads Road intersection;
• A longer term development for an alternative transport linkage around community facilities, particularly the school;
• Establishment of a coastal route for pedestrians and cyclists from Onerahi to the Whangarei Heads and Pataua, reducing speed on this route; and,
• Adoption of traffic and parking management strategies to accommodate parking demand and reduce pedestrian and through-traffic conflicts at the Parua Bay Village and the community facilities, including the recreation centre and schools.

8.4.4 Conclusion

Parua Bay is a key physical and natural feature of the city. Its unspoilt inner harbour scenery and character are just some of the key sense of place values identified for this area. The area and its strategic location hold great potential to become the ‘hub’ of Whangarei Heads. Urban design elements such as mixed use, consolidated development, better connectivity, high quality public realm and pedestrian friendly settlement would no doubt enhance the coastal village in a sustainable way. The enhancement of the streetscape is an integral component of a comprehensive effort to maximise the development potential for the Parua Bay village centre as well as its quality of life benefit to community residents. Making the village centre an attractive and inviting place to be is crucial for improving the area, and making Parua Bay attractive.
9 TWO RURAL VILLAGES AND EIGHT COASTAL VILLAGES

9.1 Introduction
The fifth settlement tier is called ‘two rural villages and eight coastal villages’. It is expected that rural villages at Maungatapere and Maungakaramea will grow to around 2,000 people; while coastal villages at Oakura, Matapouri, Tutukaka, Ngunguru, Pataua, McLeod Bay/Reotahi and Urquhart Bay/Taurikura, Waipu Cove/Langs Beach will grow to around 2,000 people in the next 50 years.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part of it will look at two rural villages, Maungakaramea and Maungatapere, according to future development and consider the development issues and opportunities. The second part will look at previous work done on Whangarei's Coastal Management Strategy for eight coastal villages6. Key directions on matters to be taken into account for structure planning in future growth areas are provided.

9.2 Maungakaramea
Maungakaramea is an area of predominantly inland rural terrain, running from the edge of the city area to the southwest boundary of the district. It includes a small portion of the harbour edge around Portland. The dominant land use is pastoral. Maungakaramea has experienced very high population growth recently. The usual resident population was 1,005 in 2006, an increase of 168, or 20% from 2001 (or 4% per annum).

The land use map below (Figure 36) reflects the land use activities around the hub of Maungakaramea:

- The Maungakaramea Domain is the social and recreational focus points of the area.
- The centre of Maungakaramea village is zoned Living 1 and Open Space Environment.
- There is no business or commercial zoning in the District Plan.
- The majority of the residential area is located at the junction of Maungakaramea, Tangihua and Tauraroa Roads.
- Apart from a gas station/garage/post office located in the village (Living 1 Environment), there is no other commercial establishment in the community.
- There has been significant rural residential development on high class soils in the area.

Maungakaramea’s visibility and importance as a rural community has grown in recent years. There is no reason to think its growth will not continue. There is a huge potential for Maungakaramea to be a more intimate village, a relaxed rural town where young families, working people and those in retirement can live in harmony. Appropriate planning could ensure the Maungakaramea reaches its potential as a well structured, highly attractive rural village.

At present, a major concern is the lack of zoned commercial land in Maungakaramea. Should rural residential development in the area continue to increase, demand for other community facilities such as a shop may arise. In the appropriate location, commercial development could be accessed by foot for many of the

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6 Eight coastal villages are: Oakura, Matapouri, Tutukaka, Ngunguru, Pataua, McLeod Bay/Reotahi, Urquhart Bay/Taurikura and Waipu Cove/Langs Beach.
residents. Similarly, for the population further into the inland part of Maungakaramea, easy to access cafes/eateries would pull more people into the village.

![Figure 36. Maungakaramea land use. Source: Whangarei District Council, 2009.](image)

Given there is no structure plan prepared for Maungakaramea at this stage, it is important to get a handle on managing rural residential development or other local urban growth issues before the negative effects of ribbon development or unplanned growth cannot be avoided or mitigated. Either at this time or in the near future, a structure plan will need to be prepared for this community in order to ensure residential and commercial development growth sustainably.

9.3 Maungatapere

Maungatapere is a relatively narrow belt of countryside that reaches west from the city’s edge and extends west to the district’s western boundary near Twin Bridges in the Mangakahia River valley. The Maungatapere district extends from the highly productive landscape around Maungatapere, with its volcanic cones, intensive orchards and stonewalls enclosures, through to the more remote inland hill country and river terraces around Parakao. The area has a predominantly pastoral lifestyle. The population of Maungatapere was 1,278 in the 2006 Census, an increase of 225 people, or 21.4% from 2001 Census (around 4% per annum).

The land use map below (Figure 37) reflects the land uses activities in the hub of Maungatapere:

- The local community recreation centres are the social and recreational focus points of the village.
The hub of Maungatapere is zoned Living 1, Living 3, Croft Timber area, Business 3 and 4 Environments.

The ‘motor oriented’ commercial and industrial buildings along State Highway 14 create a sense of the ‘centre’ of Maungatapere.

The residential area, the retirement home and the primary school is located on Mangakahia Road just off the State Highway.

The commercial and industrial areas contain quite a few under utilised sites which reduce the village’s attractiveness to potential users and the commercial viability of those activities that remain there. This area does not serve the local community well, as it is neither compact nor accessible to local pedestrian use. It also straddles the state highway, exposing people patronising businesses on both sides of the street to the hazard of through traffic.

As a result of the state highway, opportunities to cross the street in Maungatapere are very limited. There are no pedestrian crossings so it is relatively dangerous for pedestrians crossing a busy and fast state highway.

Identifying a clearly marked area for a ‘community hub’ for Maungatapere would be one way to ensure the commercial and industrial area of the village stays relatively compact. It would also allow the overall area to be designed in a way that would allow local pedestrian access without exposing residents to excessive traffic.
hazards. One side of the state highway could be designed to handle ‘motor oriented’ commercial activities and the other could be more focussed around a future cluster of shops that served both passing motorists and local community.

It is possible for Maungatapere to be a settlement with a sense of identity, which retains and continues to develop its rural character, and celebrates the natural beauty of its location. The village, if planned appropriately has the potential to develop into an attractive rural centre, in a highly attractive rural setting.

Given the numerous future growth development issues facing Maungatapere, it is recommended that a Structure Plan is prepared to provide for a coordinated approach to long term planning.

9.4 Coastal Settlements

The Whangarei District is experiencing considerable development pressure along its coast. Given this, it is important to guide development by taking into account the natural character of the coastal environment and the future wellbeing of its communities.

As part of the Whangarei District Council’s ongoing Strategic Planning Programme, the Council has prepared the Whangarei Coastal Management Strategy (CMS) in 2002. The purpose of the CMS is to ‘establish a strategic, integrated framework for managing the protection, use and development of the coastal environment within the Whangarei District’. The CMS has identified that growth and development should be managed in a manner that sustains and enhances the sense of place and special character of the Whangarei coast (CMS Strategic Objective 4.1.2).

The CMS divided Whangarei District coastline into ten distinct areas for ease of research and management, they are listed as follows:

- Oakura
- Matapouri/Woolley’s Bay
- Tutukaka
- Ngunguru
- Pataua
- Waipu Cove/Langs Beach
- McLeod Bay/Reotahi
- Taurikura/Urquharts
- Waipu Township7
- Parua Bay

7 Given Waipu Township and Parua Bay have already been discussed at some length in previous chapter; this chapter is not going to look at these two areas in details.
9.4.1 Coastal Settlement – Sense of Place

The coastal environment and areas within Whangarei’s coastal environment have a unique ‘sense of place’ derived both from natural resources (e.g. landscape) and from the social fabric of settlement and development. This special sense of place warrants protection, enhancement and development.

During the community consultation in developing the CMS, the general consensus was that the importance of ‘sense of place’ has influenced how we live, how we work and play, and how we protect our coastal environment.

The following general conclusions provide insight into the sense of place values that people have for Whangarei’s coastal environment. These are:

- **Natural features**
  - The importance of the beach and coastal setting, particular features include:
    - The diversity of beaches to visit
    - The white sand
    - The recreation activities that can be undertaken
    - Safety, for swimming etc
    - Lack of pollution
  - That the environment is unpolluted, that the waterways are clean, that there aren’t too many people, and that the natural systems are intact; and
  - The wildlife including:
    - Pohutukawa’s
    - Sandflats to mangrove areas
    - Fish and shellfish resources
    - The bird life
    - Unspoilt native bush with birdlife
  - Rural outlooks, lack of commercial development, proximity to community and commercial services; and
  - The opportunity for subdivision and development, that the land is good value and has potential.

- **The built landscape**
  - The neighbourhood, lifestyle and low density population/character of settlements.

- **Views and gateways**
  - Variety of topography, landscapes, views; and
  - Views to the beach, of off-shore islands, of bush clad hills.

- **History and heritage features**
  - The history of the Northland area generally; and
  - The sustaining waters and mountains for mana whenua.

- **Gathering places and focal points**
  - Proximity to Auckland and Whangarei; and
- The beach and places of recreation interest (e.g. Poor Knights, golf club, boat ramps etc).

Given the importance of ‘sense of place’ in the coastal communities, it is important to manage and protect this sense of place and associated values properly in the Whangarei coastal environment. The following key issues have been identified for the CMS:

- There are a number of complex resources and resource values that contribute to the ‘sense of place’ of Whangarei’s coastal environment, including heritage, landscape, special character, built land forms, land use patterns and other community resources.

- The ethic of ‘stewardship’ of kaitiaki, or sense of community autonomy in resource management contributes to the communities’ ‘sense of place’, promoting values of community ownership and sense of belonging. It is important to recognise this contribution in the management and protection of sense of place.

- The Whangarei coastal environment is a fundamental part of the district and region’s heritage and social and economic well-being. The values that contribute to sense of place have the potential to be adversely affected by subdivision, development and use of the environment.

- The Whangarei’s coastal environment is dynamic, both in terms of coastal processes and with respect to land use patterns and development. There is existing demand for development and growth of coastal communities. There is potential for this growth to both enhance or adversely impact on sense of place values.

9.4.2 Coastal Settlement - Heritage

Contributing to the ‘sense of place’ discussed above, Whangarei’s coastal environment has substantial history and significance, both for the development of Whangarei and in terms of the wider history of the country. Early Polynesian communities densely populated the Whangarei coastline, along with the rest of the east coast of Northland, and this has been frequently documented by archaeological surveys. Northland was also the first area in New Zealand to be widely affected by European contact, and it was here that the earliest mission stations and European industries were established. Remnants of these industries include the meat works at Reotahi, evidence of early Nova Scotian settlement at Whangarei Heads and Waipu, and coastal shipping and navigation remains found throughout the Whangarei harbour (BECA Planning, 2002).

This heritage contributes to the community’s well-being and sense of place and warrants protection and enhancement through the CMS, structure plans, and District Plan.

Community consultation has identified the importance of heritage values in the coastal environment, even though these values are not currently well understood. Heritage resources contribute to our sense of place and thus how we live in the coastal environment. The protection of these resources and values also influences how we protect that environment. The following issues have been identified in the CMS:

- There is limited information available on the heritage resources and heritage values in Whangarei’s coastal environment;

- Heritage values contribute to ‘sense of place’ and recreation values but the opportunities for linkages between these values is limited by the lack of information readily available;
• Heritage resources are being threatened by land use and development and in many instances this threat is not recognised or identified by those undertaking the land use or development;
• There are a number of sites and areas of significant to tangata whenua and many of these are not formally recognised in the District Plan. Nor is there a formal protocol for identifying these values with tangata whenua when land use or development is proposed;
• There are opportunities for greater recognition of local history and heritage values of areas; and
• There are many alternative methods for protection of heritage resources and values, and rules in the District Plan need to be seen as a blunt and ‘end of the line’ method.

9.4.3 Oakura

Vision
This area extends from the northern boundary of the District (Bland Bay) through to Mimiwhangata (the Department of Conservation reserve and Marine Park). The key sense of place values identified in the CMS’s consultation as features contributing to the special lifestyle of Oakura, including:

• The beauty of the coastline and the sandy beaches;
• The bush, reserves and in particular the DoC Reserves;
• The environment is unpolluted, and the waterways are clean and clear;
• Not commercial or commercialised (e.g. shops or commercial campground facilities, hotel or industry);
• Quiet, low population density, peaceful and tranquil;
• Small community and settlement;
• Limited opportunities for further residential expansion;
• Holiday atmosphere, a place to get away and relax;
• Importance of the area to tangata whenua; and,
• Accessibility to recreation places (e.g. harbour, Poor Knights, Pacific, fishing and diving, bush reserves and tracks, including Mimiwhangata, Puhutuku and Russell Forests).

The overall vision for the Oakura area is “quiet relaxed communities respecting a treasured natural environment”. Oakura will remain the hub of the area through provision of recreation resources including boat ramps and supporting infrastructure. The low key ‘holiday’ development of Bland Bay will be retained and clustered at Oakura avoiding hazard areas. The growth of the area will result in the need for better boating/recreational facilities including sewerage pump-out facilities.

Constraints and Opportunities
Oakura has considerable zoning potential for further residential development and has been identified as a recreational hub for this northern most area of the district. Further infrastructural investment is required at Oakura to address wastewater disposal constraints and avoid adverse recreational impacts. However, such investment and development needs to acknowledge the heritage values and the specific values that are contributing to the special lifestyle of this area.
While specific recognition has been given to bush and vegetation protection, the following elements are identified to achieve maintenance of the special lifestyle for Oakura including:

- Enhancing pedestrian access and pedestrian safety along the waterfront;
- Using topography and natural features to guide boundaries of development. In particular, the contour and topography has been used to assist identification of ‘larger lot residential’ areas;
- Development controls to protect the foreshore from run-off and pollution. The scale of residential development is a specific element contributing to both the sense of character of the area and to maintaining water quality and stormwater run-off to the coastal marine area. Guidelines and controls on building coverage and height are considered appropriate to ensure that development does not dominate the landscape and for protection of natural values of the coastal marine area.

Moreover, there are a number of wahi tapu and sites of significance to tangata whenua throughout this area, many of which are not formally identified or protected. It is important for council to support tangata whenua and local residents to work together and encourage establishment of guidelines for management of heritage.

9.4.4 Matapouri/Woolley’s Bay

Vision

The area extends from the Sandy Bay south to Matapouri. The key sense of place values identified in the CMS’s consultation as features contributing to the special lifestyle of this area include:

- Scenic beauty, the beauty of the coastline;
- Beaches without people, quiet, isolated, peaceful;
- Fishing resources;
- Low level of commercialism and development;
- The authentic ‘bach’ character;
• Small community, community atmosphere;
• Lots of open space and lack of built environment (including large areas of rural space);
• Views from roads entering coastal coves;
• Pioneer cemetery and heritage walkway; and,
• Community centre and community pride.

The vision for the Matapouri/Woolley's Bay area is “a maritime hub supporting a relaxed holiday playground”.

**Constraints and Opportunities**

The area has a predominantly residential living character; with holiday homes clustered amongst bush clad hills. Rural and rural lifestyle development predominates on the western side of Matapouri Road.

The landscape and vegetation of the backshore hills of Matapouri – Woolleys Bay have contributed to the special sense of place for the area. The natural character values and special sense of place and the environmental characteristics which contribute to these values warrant wider protection and management and that this can be undertaken while allowing for appropriate use and development of resources. Specific elements to achieve this outcome include:

• Reserve expansion to offset residential development, particularly around Matapouri and where such reserves can enhance access to the coastal marine area;
• Reserve expansion in areas of high or outstanding landscape and natural value to ensure that these values are appropriately protected;
• Establishing bush protection requirements in subdivision, use and development, recognising the contribution that this bush has to the natural character and sense of place of the area and its contribution as habitat to significant fauna, such as kiwi;
• In terms of housing development, low impact design guides for development (e.g. height, location, sympathetic to the environment) should be provided.

9.4.5 Tutukaka

Vision

The area extends from Rocky Bay to Wellington’s Bay (the Tutukaka coast). The key sense of place values identified for this area include:

• Rocky shoreline and rocky beaches;
• White sand beaches, beautiful beaches;
• Bush remnants and wildlife;
• Fish stocks and resource;
• Recreation facilities, including the marina;
• Lack of high density or high intensity development;
• The ‘village’ atmosphere and not too overcrowded;
• Views of Poor Knights and coastal areas;
• Access point to Poor Knights and coastal waters;
• Café’s and recreation areas, including sporting and diving facilities.

The vision for the Tutukaka area is “a maritime hub supporting a relaxed holiday playground”. Tutukaka Harbour has been identified as a ‘marine recreation hub’, attracting domestic and international travellers, providing a gateway to major tourist attractions (including as examples Poor Knights, the off-shore dive wrecks and big game fishing).
**Constraints and Opportunities**

The landscape and vegetation of the backshore hills of Tutukaka provides a special sense of place for the area. It is important to protect this sense of place by retaining the dominance of the natural landscape. In this regard, while recognising and providing for residential demand in the area, it is considered that such development should be managed to recognise the imperative of natural character and in particular the vegetation of the backshore hills. For example, the larger lot residential settlement pattern on headlands and prominent visual features should be managed through an integrated and comprehensive site or development plan to demonstrate that the special landscape features would not be compromised.

Provision for pedestrians through the marine ‘hub’ and residential settlement is also important to the sense of place of Tutukaka. Specific concerns related to speed on Matapouri Road and the road fronting the marina, the lack of pedestrian access on roads between beaches and speeds on Tutukaka Block Road. These need to be balanced with the imperative to maintain the special sense of place and natural character of the area. This can be achieved by careful development, such as provision of pedestrian access on grass swales, speed restrictions through road design, and non-road pedestrian routes along coastal margins and through reserve linkages.

Tutukaka has been identified as a key active recreation node for the wider coastal area, particularly as a gateway to major marine tourist attractions (including as examples Poor Knights, the offshore dive wrecks and big game fishing). Maintenance and enhancement of the Tutukaka marina for such recreation activities was widely supported by the communities. Balanced with this, was recognition for the need to maintain passive recreation areas and the quiet beach experience which positively contributes to the sense of place in other areas, for example those beaches and bays along Tutukaka Block Road.

Specific elements identified to achieve this outcome include:

- Provide for the marina expansion at Tutukaka Harbour Basin. While the expansion of the marina is within the coastal marine area, landside support for this expansion and facilities to enable this expansion have been identified. Specifically, such facilities include:
  - Investigation of feasibility for pump-out facilities from the marina linking to any future development of wastewater reticulation and sewage treatment.
- Identify landside facilities and reserves to support marine based recreation. This includes:
  - Development of enhanced boat facilities and off-beach trailer parking at Whangaumu;
  - Maintenance of the boat ramp facilities at Tutukaka;
  - Maintenance of the active marine ‘Water Sports Area’ at Kowharewa Bay.
- Promote the Village Green as a Community Recreation Hub. This area may be further used or developed for community recreation and commercial activities, such as craft fairs, market days or other similar initiatives.

Another important element or value identified in the community was the heritage values of the area. There is substantial rezoning capacity for growth in Tutukaka. Such development, particularly earthworks, has the
potential to adversely impact on heritage sites and areas not formally identified or protected. Moreover, the area along the coast between Ngunguru and Whangaumu has been identified by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust as having a high number of archaeological sites with evidence of Maori occupation and use of the area. As development and population increases, it is envisaged that formalisation of the protection and accessway should be provided, recognising also the need for the public to take responsibility for management and protection of this area.

9.4.6 Ngunguru

Vision

This area extends along the mouth of the Ngunguru River and along the coast to Kumi Point (the southern tip of the Ngunguru Spit). This area is characterised by a higher proportion of permanent residents, as opposed to holiday bach owners.

The vision for Ngunguru is "a lifestyle alternative centred on a scenic tidal waterway". Ngunguru Village is where the road meets the coast. It is a seaside satellite suburb of Whangarei with a general store, takeaways, garage, doctors surgery, camping, motels, plus a nine hole golf course, bowling greens and tennis courts.

The area has a special sense of place in particular the distinctive landscape features, such as the Ngunguru Spit. The Ngunguru Sandspit is a unique combination of historic and cultural heritage and natural heritage and it is one of only a few unmodified and unprotected sandspits remaining in New Zealand. Ngunguru Sandspit is of considerable significance to tangata whenua as it had a long history of occupation and has significant cultural, spiritual, historical, and environmental values. Ngunguru Sandspit is also a significant ecological site and an outstanding landscape area in the Whangarei District.

Constraints and Opportunities

Given its special sense of place values provided by high quality natural character and the coastal marine area, it is important to be able to access this area for the public. There is an opportunity to encourage ‘stop and stay’ in Ngunguru by providing enhanced recreation and tourism facilities on the foreshore. The key values of the Ngunguru area relate to the coastal resource, and opportunities should be focused on activities that reinforce these values. It is considered that such activities would likely require supporting commercial and community service facilities, such as the need to replace the Village Hall and incorporate community facilities e.g. library and meeting rooms.
The protection of Ngunguru Sandspit is important in maintaining the special sense of place of Ngunguru area. The Ngunguru Sandspit should be promoted as a heritage area, with reserve status, improved signage and information on cultural sites and features.

There is also a desire to promote pedestrian activities in the community/commercial centre. The pedestrian accessways and footpaths should be maintained on at least one side of streets; and walkway linkages between Ngunguru and Tutukaka – Whangaumu Bay should be enhanced.

9.4.7 Pataua

Vision

The vision for Pataua area is “three rivers with unique natural, cultural and living experiences”. This area includes three key residential settlement areas: Pataua North and South and Taiharuru. While this geographic area reflects the natural and coastal processes of this area (in particular the three rivers and estuarine environments) it is also in recognition of the importance and mix of holiday homes and rural-residential properties in this area.

A number of specific values have contributed to the special character or lifestyle value of this area, including the low density and character of housing, the bush surrounds and vegetation, the maintenance of a ‘destination’ (rather than ‘through route’ environment), three rivers running through to the sea, footbridge between communities, the rural outlook and the pedestrian character of the area. The area’s natural character and the coastal marine area are important for tourism and recreation development.

![Figure 42. Vision for the Horahora – Awahoa Bay area.](image-url)
Constraints and Opportunities

While the existing development of Pataua includes a fairly eclectic composite of housing development, it is considered that the scale and character of this development, particularly around the bay at Pataua South and the mouth of the river at Pataua North is distinctive and contributes to the special lifestyle and character of the area. It is considered that the development of design guidelines for structures and buildings would assist the council and community to better understand the specific elements of development that contribute to the sense of place or character of the settlement.

The key values of the Pataua area relate to the coastal resource, and that work opportunities should be focused on activities that reinforce these values. In the longer term, it was recognised that such activities would likely require supporting commercial and community service facilities. For this reason, it is considered there is an opportunity to provide the area with a local community centre with future development at Pataua North. Such facilities would provide for parking, playground and local business/services, servicing the resident community but also the recreation activities which are likely to develop in the area.

9.4.8 Waipu Cove/Langs Beach

Vision

This key sense of place values identified for this area include the following:

- The wide, white sandy beach;
- Uretiti reserve and conservation area;
- Bird sanctuary, bird life;
- Bush, indigenous trees, shade trees, Pohutukawa along the beach;
- Recreation facilities including boating facilities;
- Few shops, not too commercialised, no industry;
- Friendly clustered communities and rural coastal lifestyle;
- Nova Scotia history;
- Views of Bream bay, off-shore islands, Whangarei Heads, Mt Manaia;
- Golf course and recreation areas;
- Close to urban areas, Auckland and Whangarei.

The vision for the Uretiti-Bream Trail area is a “holiday playground and heritage centre”. This vision includes the protection of natural character values of Uretiti by managing recreation access and use of this area, and the tourism promotion on the ‘Bream Bay’ coastal experience.

Constraints and Opportunities

There has been recognition of the coastal habitat and landscape values of the area. Values have been attributed particularly to the Uretiti area and backshore bush areas of the Brenderwyn hills. The protection of coastal foreshore vegetation along Bream Bay and between Waipu Cove and Langs Beach has been identified as a matter of particular importance for the natural character and residential amenity of settlement areas. Specific elements to achieve this outcome include:
• Encouraging pet control and pet management; and,
• Encouraging bush protection on private land. As well as enhancing the sense of place and natural values of the Living Environment, protection of habitat was identified as important for maintaining and enhancing important wildlife in the area.

Given the significance of recreation values of the Bream Bay coast and the potential for these values to enhance tourism, there are opportunities to promote the ‘Bream Bay’ coastal and tourism experience by:

• Creating a coastal route with provision for cyclists/pedestrians from Waipu Cove to Mangawhai;
• Enhancement of recreation facilities at appropriate locations (e.g. boat ramps, parking and protection of surf club at Waipu Cove);
• Discouraging aquaculture management in the area;
• Improving signage to reserves and information about the area; and
• Protecting view points on the scenic route.

In terms of heritage issues and the opportunities to protect heritage resources, there are a number of wahi tapu and sites of significance to tangata whenua throughout this area, many of which are not formally identified or protected. The area has a rich heritage including early New Zealand settlement from Nova Scotia, not only does it contribute to the community’s sense of place, the heritage sites and areas also have the potential to be an ‘attractor’ for visitors and eco-tourists alike to come and visit this area.

9.4.9 McLeod Bay/Reotahi

Vision

The vision for Ocean Beach – Whangarei Heads area is a “community lifestyle choice clustered amongst natural and heritage landmarks”. This area is characterised by smaller residential settlements clustered along
the Whangarei Harbour, to the Heads. The Heads is considered as a living heritage destination, and the
distinctive landscape features (e.g. McLeod Bay, Mount Manaia and Bream Head Scenic Reserve) and valued
vegetation of the backshore hills provide the special sense of place of this area.

The local communities have a strong desire to maintain this sense of community with small pockets of
development and cluster residential settlement, rather than allowing sprawl or ribbon development
connecting settlement areas.

Constraints and Opportunities

While a large area contributing to a unique sense of place of McLeod Bay/Reotahi is already in public
ownership (e.g. Mt Manaia, Mt Aubrey and Bream Head) it is important to maintain and protect the
character of landscapes surrounding these features and maintain the overall sense of place through bush
and habitat protection. In this regard, while recognising and providing for residential demand in the area, it
is considered that such development should be managed to recognise the imperative of the natural
character and in particular the vegetation of the backshore hills. Furthermore, it is considered that such
managed use of these areas can result in enhanced landscape values through revegetation.

Boating in particular is an important recreation value in the McLeod Bay/Reotahi area. During the CMS's
consultation, some support was identified for upgrading boating facilities. However, concern was also
expressed by others that such development would encourage greater vehicle movements (as people would
drive boats from Parua Bay out to the Heads for launching facilities). In addition to boat launching, ‘active’
marine recreation values were identified (including water skiing, wind surfing and jet skis). Conversely
concern was expressed about the impact these same activities have on the recreation values for other uses
of the coastal marine area and coastal environment (particularly for swimmers and for local
residents/walkers and ‘passive’ recreation users). There are opportunities to upgrade boating facilities and encourage active marine recreation activities at McLeod Bay without compromising the natural character values of the area. These include:

- Investigate and develop off-beach parking at Reotahi;
- Encourage maintenance and upgrading of the boat ramp and parking facilities at McLeod Bay, linked to shore stabilisation works and ferry launching/berthing facilities;
- Maintain beach boat launching facilities at McLeod Bay beach, providing improved off-beach parking;
- Investigate potential for future reserve expansion to the north, providing pedestrian access to the beach with off-beach parking facilities; and,
- Establish a dedicated active recreation area north of McLeod Bay, recognising the natural ‘wilderness’ values of the Nook to the north of the area.

In terms of heritage issues and the opportunities of protecting heritage resources, there are a number of wahi tapu and sites of significance to tangata whenua throughout this area, many of which are not formally identified or protected. The area has a rich heritage including early New Zealand settlement, not only does it contribute to the community’s sense of place; it is considered these heritage values will also have the potential to be an ‘attractor’ for visitors and eco-tourists alike to come and visit this area.

9.4.10 Taurikura/Urquharts Bay

**Vision**

The vision for this area is “community lifestyle choice clustered amongst natural and heritage landmarks”. The area is characterised by smaller residential settlements clustered along the Whangarei Harbour, to the Heads. Development extends along this road, clustered in the bays and headlands (e.g. Tamaterau and Solomon’s Point). A generally permanent population characterises residential development. The area has
been defined largely because of the distinct natural heritage resources and sense of place values identified by the community in this area. Key sense of place values identified for this area include the following:

- Inner harbour scenery and character;
- Wildlife, bird life, particularly kiwi;
- Peaceful, peace, tranquillity;
- Conservation reserves, reserve areas and protected areas;
- Low population;
- Little or limited commercial development;
- The mountains, in particular Mount Manaia, Mount Aubrey, Bream Head;
- Harbour views, rural views and the changing scene with the tides;
- Riparian rights and access to beaches.

**Constraints and Opportunities**

The distinctive landscape features and valued vegetation of the backshore hills have contributed to the special sense of place of this area. While a large area contributing to the landscape values of the area is already in public ownership (e.g. Mt Manaia and Bream Head/Peach Cove) the community have identified the importance of maintaining and protecting the character of landscapes between these features and in maintaining in overall sense of place through bush and habitat protection. In this regard, while recognising and providing for limited residential demand in the area, it is considered that such development should be managed to recognise the imperative of the natural character and in particular the vegetation of the backshore hills. Furthermore, it is considered that such managed use of these areas can result in enhanced landscape values through revegetation.

**9.5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is considered heritage values in Whangarei have contributed to sense of place for the local community. Recognising and providing for those resources and resource values that contribute to sense of place will be an important component of ensuring that both Structure Plans and the Sustainable Futures 30/50 Sub-regional Growth Strategy provide a successful vision for the future of these areas.

The protection and recognition of valued landscapes is a particular concern by the community, especially in areas such as Tutukaka, Ngunguru, Pataua and Whangarei Heads.
While the protection of heritage values and sites of significance to tangata whenua are matters protected under legislation, there is also the potential for these sites and areas to be ‘attractors’ to the coastal environment, contributing to the sense of place and ‘marketing’ of areas, particularly for tourism and visitors. Visitors and tourists are interested in heritage trails and the history of the area, such as:

- the wrecks off-shore at Tutukaka;
- Ngunguru Sandspit;
- the old meat-works site at Reotahi; and,
- Waipu’s glebe and Highland Games.

It is necessary to recognise the distinct features and sense of place values that the community consider make an area attractive to the wider population. Further investigation on the heritage values of these areas and possible information regarding the areas local history and recreation development of the areas will contribute to the heritage and sense of place of the Whangarei coastal environment.
10. **CONCLUSIONS**

- Sense of place is an important, multifaceted concept that attracts, retains and enriches communities in relation to a particular locality. A sense of place emerges through knowledge of the history, geography and geology of an area, its flora and fauna, the stories associated with a place, and the relationships of communities with the land.

- A number of aspects contribute to a sense of place and can be improved to enhance that sense of place. These include historic and cultural heritage, natural heritage and landscape, land uses, gathering places and focal points, views and gateways, and the built environment encompassing such as aspects as local character and amenity, neighbourhood identity, and urban design.

- Urban design describes the physical features that define the character or image of a street, neighbourhood, community, city, or the district as a whole. Urban design is the visual and sensory relationship between people and the built environment. The built environment includes not only buildings and streets, but also the natural environments which they shape and incorporate into the urban framework.

- Urban design is increasingly recognised as an important facet of urban planning, but has only recently achieved widespread attention in New Zealand. It is a process to foster quality in the built and natural environment as the city/district changes. Whangarei District Council is committed to creating quality urban design across the district.

- The character of Whangarei may be perceived differently by each citizen or visitor, although there are several basic design elements that are commonly recognised. Whangarei’s distinctive character results from an unparalleled natural setting, including beaches, bays, and valued vegetation of the backshore hills that allow the evolution of geographically distinct neighbourhoods. The topography and Whangarei's 'winterless' climate is ideal for outdoor pedestrian activity of all kinds.

- Urban design and the city’s site design review processes (e.g. Whangarei 20/20 Plus) affect the outcome of the city’s development pattern. In many respects, design review offers a ‘front line’ opportunity to implement the city’s visions and comprehensive plan policies for encouraging redevelopment, preserving historic heritage, conserving natural resources, enhancing the natural environment, and imposing order and compatibility in land use.

- Urban design extends in important ways into all elements of planning, including heritage resources, land use, transportation, housing options, economic development and redevelopment, infrastructure and services, and the environment.

- As Whangarei District evolves, new and varied planning issues are created. Given the fact that people are more mobile in today’s society, there are increased opportunities to choose where to live,
work, and visit. The physical appearance of a community and its amenities weigh heavily on this decision.

- Good urban design can help generate a sense of place for the district and make it more of a destination, rather than a place to pass through. Issues such as density, built form and aesthetic character will continue to be considered to ensure that new development supports and enhances the overall character of the Whangarei District and its special places and neighbourhoods.

- Whangarei’s distinctive neighbourhoods are a great asset to the city. Some neighbourhoods date back to the early days of Whangarei’s history and some of the buildings and precincts are still emerging, but each has elements that set it apart from the others and establish its identity. Neighbourhood character is defined in part by certain physical qualities that repeat throughout neighbourhoods, such as landscape and building styles, and materials. The character of a neighbourhood is also defined by factors including topography and natural features, street layout and streetscape, and land uses.

- The concept of mixed use should be implemented where residential, commercial, employment and civic uses are present in a community. The intent is that a high quality of urban design will achieve the maximum possible integration of uses and activities connected to the surrounding community fabric and the transit system.

- Villages (i.e. coastal, rural and urban) or the primary centre (i.e. the proposed Marsden Primary Centre) should be compact and walkable, with inviting streets and public spaces for community events. Villages/primary centre will serve as focal points for public gatherings as a result of their outstanding public spaces. In addition, villages would be created pedestrian in scale, accessible by diverse multi-modal means, and varied with uses and activities that serve local daily needs.

- Developing a strong sense of place, through good urban design incorporating those values both natural and historic/cultural that presently exist, will enhance the district and its varied settlements (from Whangarei City to coastal villages) as a place to live, work and play. Sense of place serves to attract and retain residents in the district and thus assist in enhancing the Whangarei District as a place to live and raise a family and to invest in businesses and property.

- A sense of place also serves to attract visitors and tourists thereby contributing in economic terms to employment and social development. A strong sense of place contributes to economic wellbeing, and economic prosperity contributes in turn to a positive sense of place. Both contribute to the sustainable development of the district over the long term.
11. REFERENCES


