

04

Town Basin Extension
Development
Proposal

TOWN BASIN SITE
SITE ANALYSIS



The Town Basin Site was chosen as a site specific urban design exercise to test the 'best use' of Council-owned land, adjacent land and facilities. As a result of the latest Dent Street realignment project, a portion of waterfront land and its adjacent blocks have become an opportunity for new development. The site could be the first catalyst project of new 20/20 plus guideline and would set a precedent for Council initiated design-led development.

SITE ANALYSIS

Connection to the waterfront via open sight lines and pedestrian access are the key assets of the Town Basin site. Creation of a green connection along the Hatea River is essential for the site being a key segment of the green necklace concept. Connection back to the CBD core and to the Cameron Street Mall is another main objective also identified in original 20/20 studies. Maintaining visual and pedestrian connections through John and James Streets, directly down to the water and adapted pedestrian bridge, as well as a main connection from the city gateway through Walton Street should be sought. From a vehicular traffic perspective, Dent Street is a major vehicle route to the immediate north of the CBD. The Dent bridge crossing is a major connection to the eastern suburbs, the airport and

beyond. The gateway site between the bridge and Dent Street lies immediately adjacent to this critical portion of the road network and provides an interesting opportunity for highly-visible iconic facility. However, the 360-degree visual exposure and heavy vehicle traffic will be a challenge for accessibility to the iconic facility site. 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.

Based on the Town Basin Analysis, four options for Town Basin development were modelled. The options range from passive green space to iconic museums and conference uses to an active canal waterfront.



TOWN BASIN SITE
OPTION 01. GRAND CANAL



Grand Canal Plan

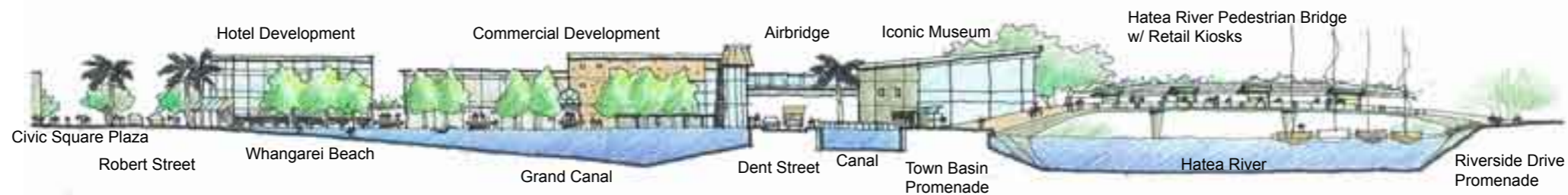
Option 01 : The Grand Canal option alludes to a former canal from Hatea River into the CBD blocks. Tracing back into the history of Whangarei, Maori dug canals in pre-European times for waka passage and irrigation. By the 19th century, wide canal basins for timber and service delivery were created. In post-war times, Waiarohia River was canalised to 'reclaim' land. These canals have all been buried today; however, re-discovering a great canal in the Whangarei CBD will add to amenity, value, identity and character. The proposed Grand Canal brings a civic-scaled portion of the harbour into the city. Thereby strongly connecting Cameron Street Mall to Town Basin. The constructed canal can either be a completely separating waterway from the tidal Hatea River, or Dent Street can incorporate a lock system to maintain the water level constant. The properties adjacent to the canal would be redeveloped to an advantage of waterfront opportunities. An inner-city beach, with waterfront restaurants and bars as well as art installations and temporal water related events could be hosted. The downside to the option is in realization. It will require privately owned land and the construction of canal will reflect significant cost.



1946 Photos showing original canals



Grand Canal Axonometric



Grand Canal Section

**TOWN BASIN SITE
OPTION 02. BIG PARK**



Option 02: Big Park proposes maximum greening of water edge, to enhance the green necklace concept via a large waterfront central park. The site to south of the new vehicle bridge is proposed as a gateway sculpture park, an extension of Town Basin to make connection to aquatic centre across the bridge. It will also serve as an inner-city park which Whangarei CBD lacks. The lands adjacent to the park to south-west along Walton, John and James Streets are proposed to be redeveloped mainly as commercial as well as mix use residential and hotels (3 and 4-star rated). The redevelopment edge along Dent Street facing the proposed park requires careful treatment to open up to the street across to the park, as traffic volume of Dent Street challenges direct physical connection. The redevelopments will also need to act as a conduit, or connector, between Town Basin and Cameron Street Mall.

Downside of this option may be under-utilisation of large portion of prominent, Council-owned waterfront properties which could result in lack of activities along the water. Distinct segregation of landuse and character either side of Dent Street in conjunction with physical segregation by the heavy traffic may cast difficulties in achieving full integration of this option.

**TOWN BASIN SITE
OPTION 03. BUILT UP**



Option 03: Built Up option proposes to structure the corner site at the Dent Street / Hatea Drive intersection. The building is ideal to be an iconic conference centre and museum reinforcing the Whangarei brand as the "gathering place in the Pacific". It will be highly visible from heavy traffic routes as well as being a visual focal point from James Street, acting as an orientation icon. Access and parking to this building may be a challenge. An air bridge is proposed over Dent Street and will assure unimpeded pedestrian access between the iconic conference centre site and adjacent commercial redevelopment which will provide substantial car parks internal to the structure. The southern half of the waterfront site is proposed to be developed as a waterfront park. This site will provide waterside pedestrian connection from the adapted pedestrian bridge to John and Walton Street separate from vehicle traffic. It could host an amphitheatre with backdrop of marina and Parihaka hills which could be used for various events.

**TOWN BASIN SITE
OPTION 04. MIX**



Option 04: The Mix option proposes a viable combination of the Options 2 and 3. The gateway site located to the south of the new vehicle bridge will be anchored by an iconic museum and Information Centre, similar to the recently-constructed Puke Ariki museum in New Plymouth (a scaled footprint of Puke Ariki is actually depicted in this option). Externally, this facility would be attractive from all sides with minimal vehicle access, primarily for exhibition set-ups and taxis. An airbridge will provide pedestrian access over Dent Street to a proposed multi-level commercial facility, carpark structure and hotel complex. Another airbridge will allow pedestrian traffic to move over John Street into a larger commercial facility that would serve as an attractive backdrop to an events amphitheater waterfront park at the Town Basin with smaller retail frontage facilities to cater to park users.

A larger, multi-storied hotel development would be incorporated into the hillside on Dent Street to the west, allowing structured parking to be buried into the grade while rooms would have commanding views southeast down the Hatea River. Smaller low-rise mixed use developments would anchor the remaining two corners at Dent Street and Rathbone. The green necklace linear park would provide connections beneath the new vehicle bridge offering river walks along both sides of the Hatea River northbound, including access to Aquatic Centre and Whangarei Falls.



Puke Ariki



Puke Ariki lawn and plaza