

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- There are 92 hectares of usable Activity Zone land across Dunedin.
- 10.2% of ground-floor premises are vacant in the Activity Zones, with a lower level of vacancy in the central city than in outlying Activity Zones.
- 16 resource consent applications were granted for new retail activity outside the Activity Zones from 2000 to 2002.
- Pedestrian counts have been established to monitor the vitality of the central city and South Dunedin.
- While Dunedin residents are satisfied with the look and feel of the central city, there is a perception among some that the main street is an unsafe place to walk at night.
- From 1991 to 2001, there was a 19% increase in the number of people living in the central city and a 38% increase in the number of private occupied dwellings.

### WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT?



Town centres form the commercial, social and cultural focal points of Dunedin. As well as providing gathering points for people to work, shop, play and live, they each have their own special character derived from the way they were settled and developed over time. For instance, the unique character and amenity of Dunedin's inner city arises from its significant heritage buildings with a dominance of Victorian and Edwardian design; views of skylines, the Town Belt and rural areas; the presence of public open spaces such as the Octagon; and continuous building frontages on the main streets.

The Dunedin City District Plan seeks to preserve the special character of Dunedin's town centres, while ensuring that they remain vital and vibrant places. This report, the fourth in the District Plan monitoring series, presents information designed to assess whether Dunedin's town centres are being sustainably managed.

### WHAT IS THE DUNEDIN CITY DISTRICT PLAN?

The goal of the District Plan is the sustainable management of the natural and physical resources of Dunedin. The Plan identifies issues and objectives, and sets out policies and methods (including rules), to manage the effects of land use activities on the environment. The Plan specifies Anticipated Environmental Results (AERs) that the policies and methods are designed to achieve.

Monitoring is designed to assess whether the District Plan is achieving its goal of sustainable management of resources. The Resource Management Act requires Dunedin City Council to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the Plan and take appropriate action where this is shown to be necessary. This first round of monitoring reports concentrates on establishing a baseline of monitoring information rather than drawing any firm conclusions about the performance of Plan provisions.

District Plan monitoring contributes to Dunedin City Council's Long Term Council Community Plan, and in particular achievement of the community outcome Sustainable City and Environment.

## WHAT IS THE DISTRICT PLAN TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

The Plan creates three types of Activity Zone which manage the effects of how town centres are used, including making certain activities permitted in each zone (Table 1):

- the Central Activity Zone (CAZ) comprises the 'central business district' of Dunedin;
- fourteen Local Activity Zones (LAZ) include various suburban shopping centres around Dunedin, ranging from the larger precincts in South Dunedin and Mosgiel to smaller outlying areas such as Middlemarch, Outram and Portobello (Map 1); and
- three further zones provide for Large Scale Retail (LSR) – larger 'destination' shops usually reached by motor vehicle.

**Table 1. Permitted Activities in the Activity Zones**

Type of Activity	Central Activity Zone	Local Activity Zone	Large Scale Retail Zone
Commercial (retail, offices, restaurants)	✓	✓	
Large scale retail (minimum gross retail floor area of 1,500 m <sup>2</sup> )	✓	✓	✓
Recreational	✓	✓	✓
Residential	✓	✓	✓
Community support (health, welfare, education, cultural, religious activities but excluding hospitals)	✓	✓	
Licensed premises (e.g. pubs, bars)	✓	✓	
Commercial residential (e.g. hotels, motels, backpackers)	✓	✓	
Industrial			✓*
Service (transport, storage, repair of goods)			✓*
Service stations, vehicle & boat yards, garden centres			✓*

\* Permitted in the Large Scale Retail Zone surrounding Crawford Street only.

The District Plan places a strong emphasis on retaining a strong and vibrant city centre, while also recognising that the southern end of the Central Activity Zone is currently under-utilised. The Plan identifies that sustainable management of Activity Zones will be enhanced by ensuring that:

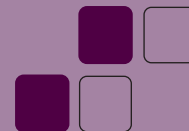
- Activity Zones continue to provide for a range of complementary activities;
- the Inner City Area and Local Activity Zones are pleasant places for people;
- the adverse effects of activities are managed;
- the traffic effects of Large Scale Retail activities are managed; and
- the conflicts between traffic and pedestrians in Activity Zones are managed.

Traffic activities (including parking) are a major factor in the form and functioning of town centres, whether it be for reasons of accessibility, efficiency or safety. Transport issues across Dunedin are to be dealt with separately and collectively in an upcoming *Monitoring Transport* report.

The Anticipated Environmental Results prioritised for monitoring are as follows:

- 9.9.2 Retention and sustainability of the Central Activity Zone as the focus of social, administration, commercial and retail activities within the city;
- 9.9.3 The sustainable management of the Central Activity, Large Scale Retail and Local Activity Zones; and
- 9.9.5 Protection and enhancement of amenities of the Inner City Area.





## Indicator 1 Land contained in Activity Zones

Indicator Value 92 hectares of usable Activity Zone land

Indicator Date July 2003

Definitions Includes all land zoned Central Activity, Local Activity and Large Scale Retail minus land held as roads, motorways, rail corridors and public reserves.

Data Source Dunedin City Council

AERs 9.9.2, 9.9.3

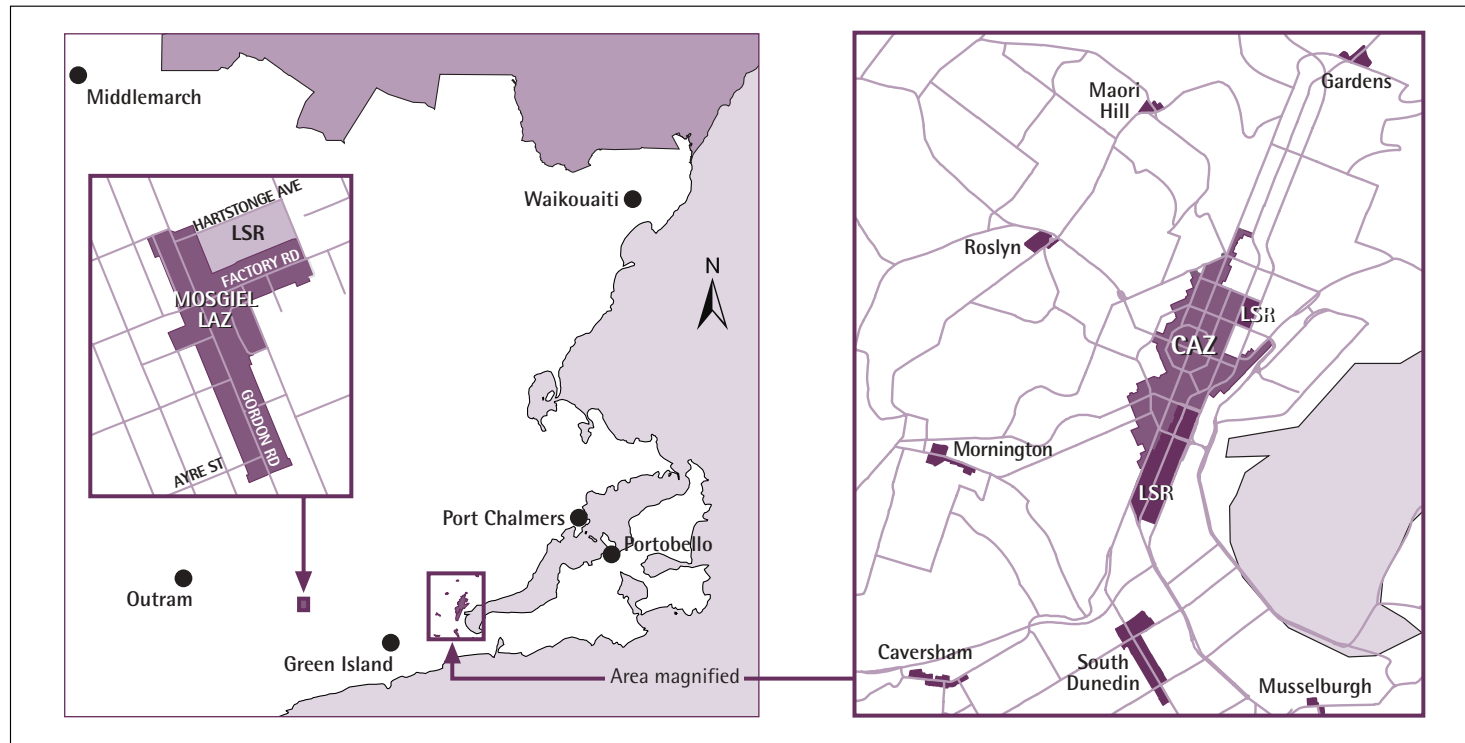
**Table 2. Land Contained in Activity Zones**

Zone	Total Area (ha)	Usable Area (ha)	Usable Area (%)
Central Activity	62.8	41.3	66%
Local Activity	51.9	37.0	71%
Large Scale Retail	24.3	14.1	58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>139.0</b>	<b>92.4</b>	<b>66%</b>

Activity Zones cover 139 hectares of land across Dunedin, of which two thirds or 92 hectares is usable land, the remainder being land dedicated for transport routes or reserves. Half of all land zoned in the 14 Local Activity Zones is contained in the three largest zones – Mosgiel, South Dunedin and Green Island.

Map 1 shows the location of Activity Zones across Dunedin, with seven Local Activity Zones lying in an arc around the central city, and the remaining seven (plus the Mosgiel LSR) located further afield.

**Map 1. Location of Activity Zones**



## Unzoned Commercial Areas

A number of Dunedin's commercial areas are zoned Residential rather than Local Activity, such as Andersons Bay, Forbury Corner, North Dunedin and St Clair Esplanade. Residential zoning means that any new commercial development or expansion of existing businesses will typically be a non-complying activity and require resource consent. The St Clair Esplanade block is currently under investigation as to whether it should be rezoned as a Local Activity Zone.

## Indicator 2 Vacancy rates

Indicator Value	10.2% of ground-floor Activity Zone premises are vacant
Indicator Date	August 2002
Definitions	Derived from survey of ground-floor activities that are physically vacant - excludes premises located either below ground or first floor and above.
Data Source	University of Otago Marketing Department, Dunedin City Council
AERs	9.9.2, 9.9.3, 9.9.5

Vacancy rates are lower in the Central Activity Zone than in other Activity Zones. A certain level of vacant premises should be considered healthy as any commercial area will have a natural turnover of businesses, with some of the vacant sites about to undergo redevelopment. However, high vacancy levels may indicate potential issues with regard to the sustainability and amenity of an area. No Local Activity Zone had significantly high vacancy rates, although Caversham and Port Chalmers were slightly higher than the rest. Maori Hill had no vacant premises at the time of the survey.

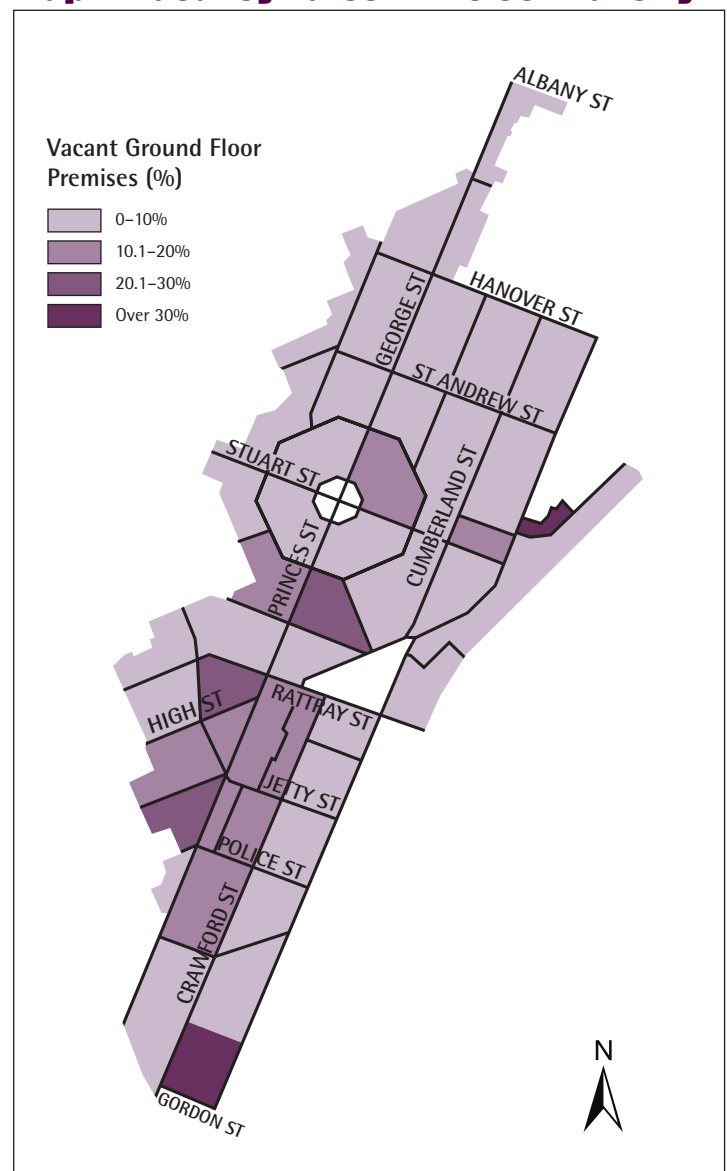
**Table 3. Vacant Premises in Activity Zones**

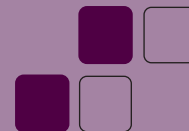
Zone	Vacant Ground Floor Premises	Total Ground Floor Premises	Vacant Premises (%)
Central Activity	60	819	7.3
Local Activity	80	602	13.3
Large Scale Retail	23	179	12.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>10.2</b>

In terms of actual floor space, a study currently underway suggests there are around 10,400m<sup>2</sup> of vacant retail trading space across Dunedin. This includes the large Big Fresh site now vacant in the northern LSR Zone. These floor space calculations are based on a narrower definition of retail activity than used in the District Plan, and unlike the premise-based analysis here do not cover all sites within the Activity Zones.

Within central Dunedin, there is some difference in vacancy levels (Map 2). The area south of the Octagon along Princes St tends to have higher levels of vacancy. It should be noted that there are more multi-storey buildings in this area than north of the Octagon and these results do not include above-ground-floor activity. A number of recent conversions of commercial buildings to apartment dwellings in this area, along with new hotel developments currently in progress, may help over time to counter the relatively high level of vacant ground-floor sites.

**Map 2. Vacancy Rates in the Central City**





## Indicator 3 Out-of-zone retail activity

Indicator Value	16 resource consents granted for new retail developments
Indicator Date	January 2000 to December 2002
Definitions	Monitors resource consent applications for new retail activity in all zones other than Activity Zones over a 3 year period.
Data Source	Dunedin City Council
AERs	9.9.2, 9.9.3, 9.9.5

The character of Dunedin's central city has been reinforced by the retention of 'main street' shopping, with the central area less affected by the location of large shopping malls elsewhere in the city than is the case in other cities. As the District Plan emphasises the need to retain a strong and vibrant city centre, it is important to monitor retail and other commercial activity that establishes outside the Activity Zones.

There have been a number of successful consent applications for new retail and other commercial activities outside the Activity Zones over the last few years, with a particularly noticeable trend in the Industrial 1 Zone. The retail activities granted consent across Dunedin range in size, with most being small to medium scale single-tenant developments. However, two large multi-tenant retail developments have been established in the Industrial 1 Zone over this time. One of these applications was initially declined by Dunedin City Council but subsequently approved in the Environment Court.

**Table 4. New Out-of-Zone Commercial Activity, 2000–2002**

Zone	Restaurant, café or bar	Retail	Other Commercial*	Total
Campus	1			1
Industrial 1	4	9	8	21
Industrial 2			1	1
Residential 1	3	4	4	11
Residential 2	1	1	3	5
Residential 3	1		3	4
Residential 4			1	1
Rural	1	2		3
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>47</b>

\* Other commercial activity includes a wide range of businesses that don't involve on-site retailing, for example, real estate and other professional offices, hairdressing salons and commercial gyms.



## Large Scale Retail

Large Scale Retail Zones were created to manage the effects of large retail developments that require bigger sites and attract high levels of traffic. However, there has only been one new development greater than the 1,500m<sup>2</sup> threshold in the LSR Zones, with several other large-scale developments establishing either in the Central or Local Activity Zones or as non-complying activities in the Industrial 1 Zone.

The LSR Zones are currently a mix of either light industrial or non-complying activities such as small-scale retail and other commercial businesses. This situation was reflected in the seven non-complying consents granted in the LSR Zones from 2000 to 2002, six of which were for new retail activity under 1,500m<sup>2</sup> and one for a non-retail commercial development. In light of this, Dunedin City Council has begun a review of the role of LSR Zones and their relationship to the other Activity Zones.

# MONITORING town centres august 2003

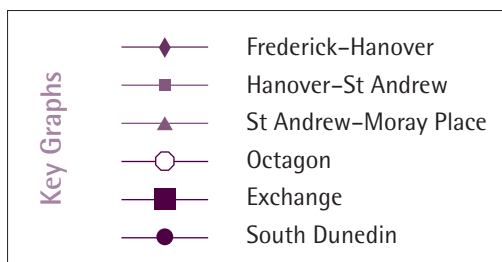
## Indicator 4 Pedestrian counts

Indicator Value	No value – baseline data only
Indicator Date	Various dates in March, April, August, October 2002
Definitions	Pedestrian counts are measured on the footpath along various street blocks and in the central carriageway of the Octagon; in some cases counts have been made on either side of the street and the average count taken.
Data Source	Dunedin City Council
AERs	9.9.2, 9.9.5

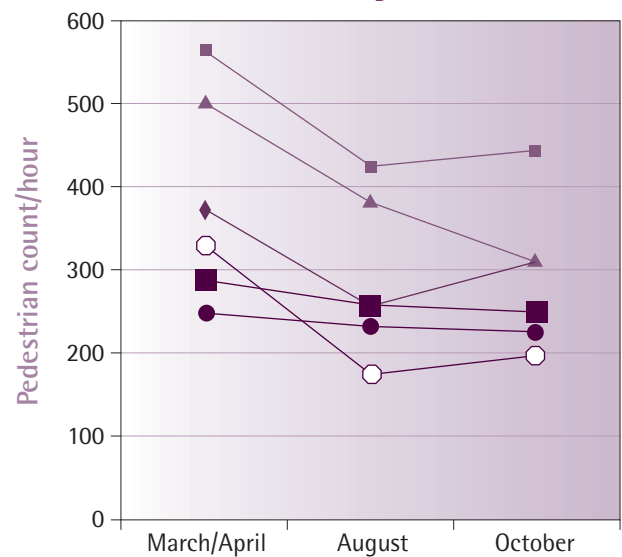
The amenity of the central city includes those things that make it a good place to be, such as its character, heritage, open spaces, safety and cleanliness. These both contribute to, and are dependent on, the vitality and vibrancy of the central city. One simple measure of vibrancy is pedestrian counts.

Dunedin City Council has commissioned regular pedestrian counts in the Central Activity Zone and South Dunedin since 2002. Counts are taken at different intervals to measure changing pedestrian numbers at different times, days, and months. Because of external factors such as weather and seasonality, repeated and long-term sampling is required before any indepth analysis of these counts can be made.

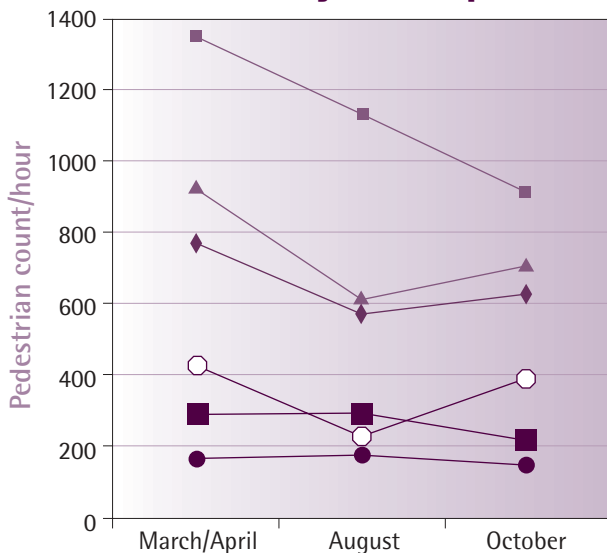
The graphs on this page give examples of the data that will be used as a baseline for monitoring pedestrian numbers over time. The highest pedestrian counts occur in the Hanover–St Andrew Street block which contains the Meridian Mall, Golden Centre and Albion Lane shopping areas. While the Octagon counts appear low it must be remembered that these are for the central carriageway only.



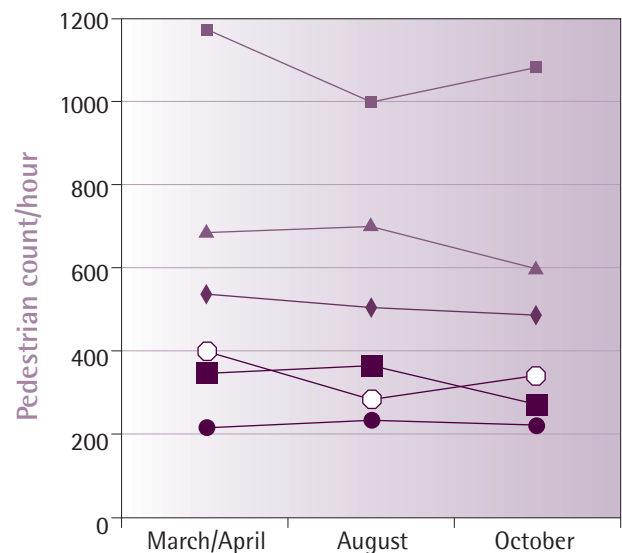
**Wednesday 10–11am**

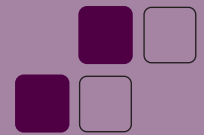


**Saturday 12.30–1.30pm**



**Wednesday 3–4pm**





## Indicator 5 Safety in the central city

Indicator Value	39% of residents do not feel safe walking the main street at night
Indicator Date	May 2003
Data Source	Residents' Opinion Survey 2003, Dunedin City Council
AERs	9.9.2, 9.9.5

## Indicator 6 Look and feel of the central city

Indicator Value	87% satisfaction with the overall look and feel of the central city
Indicator Date	May 2002
Definitions	While not collected in 2003, this data may be captured again in future years.
Data Source	Residents' Opinion Survey 2002, Dunedin City Council
AERs	9.9.2, 9.9.5

One aspect of amenity is how safe people feel in our town centres. While central city safety does not appear to be an issue in Dunedin during the day, in common with other cities some residents do not feel safe at night. Dunedin City Council has been looking at measures to improve this situation, including the recent introduction of a bylaw banning the consumption of alcohol in central city streets. In addition, on-going improvements to street furniture, lighting, trees and paving contribute positively to both the safety and overall amenity of urban areas.

In 2002, 87% of residents surveyed were satisfied with the look and feel of the central city, while 13% were dissatisfied. A significant factor in the look and feel of Dunedin is the presence of a high number of heritage buildings and the contribution they make to the city's townscape. In 2003, 86% of residents agreed that the city's architecture is a great asset. The indicators outlined in the earlier *Monitoring Heritage* report, which include the protection for and retention of Dunedin's heritage buildings and structures, will also be used in any future evaluation of whether the amenity of our town centres is being protected.

Most of the resource consent activity in the Activity Zones concerns heritage and townscape matters, with large parts of the Central Activity Zone included in townscape and heritage precincts. From 2000 to 2002, the alteration of facades and other building additions, re-painting of buildings, and changes to signage comprised two-thirds of all resource consents granted in the Activity Zones.

## Residential Living in the Central City

Dunedin has experienced the nationwide trend back to inner-city living, with the conversion of formerly commercial buildings into apartments particularly noticeable in the southern CAZ and the Crawford Street LSR. Residential living is considered a good use of sometimes under-utilised areas, and can contribute to the amenity of an area by bringing people into that area.

From 1991 to 2001, the population living in the Central Activity Zone increased by 19%, while the number of private occupied dwellings increased by 38%, despite a large decrease in population caused by a Moray Place hostel converting to motels. Increases have been most marked in the southern end of the CAZ, from Dowling Street south, where most of the apartment conversions have occurred. For example, in the CAZ south of High Street the population has doubled from 114 to 225 while the number of private occupied dwellings has increased from 30 to 72.

Residential activity can have the potential to give rise to reverse sensitivity issues, where residents become unhappy with the lower level of amenity, particularly in terms of noise. Policy 9.3.10 of the Plan recognises that people who choose to live in Activity Zones cannot expect the same level of amenity encountered in areas zoned specifically for residential purposes. Dunedin City Council is currently investigating methods for addressing any conflict that might arise.

## WHAT DO THE INDICATORS MEAN?

Dunedin's District Plan manages the use of town centres through three types of Activity Zones, which allow for and control commercial development, along with other activities such as recreational and residential use. One type of zone, Large Scale Retail, does not appear to be working as intended and a review has been initiated of this zone and how it relates to other Activity Zones.

The sustainability of town centres is reliant on their continued role as strong focal points for commercial, social and cultural activities, along with the preservation of the amenity of these areas. Some locations face quite high levels of vacancy which may pose a threat to their on-going sustainability. Conversion of commercial buildings into apartment dwellings provides one solution, as well as contributing to the amenity of these areas through bringing people into them.

A further threat to the Activity Zones may be posed by new retail and other commercial development locating in other zones. This out-of-zone development has been a feature in Dunedin over recent years, making it important to monitor the on-going incidence and effect of this.

Urban amenity can be a difficult concept to both understand and measure. Amenity indicators included in this report include pedestrian counts, to assess how many people are attracted into the city centre, along with residents' perceptions of the character and safety of the central city. Along with other information in this report, these indicators will form the basis of future evaluations of the Activity Zone provisions and their contribution toward the sustainable management of Dunedin's town centres.

## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The next report in the District Plan monitoring series is *Monitoring Natural Environment*. It will examine the protection the Plan provides for Dunedin's natural environment, including significant trees, areas of indigenous vegetation and fauna, and areas with high landscape values. It will also consider the effects of any activities occurring in these areas.

District Plan monitoring reports are available on the City of Dunedin website [www.cityofdunedin.com](http://www.cityofdunedin.com)



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Your feedback on this report would be welcomed. To provide feedback, or to obtain further information about the District Plan monitoring programme, please contact:

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