

STRATH TAIERI COMMUNITY BOARD COMMUNITY PLAN

Adopted 2 June 2026

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Community Plan summarises the needs and priorities of the communities within the Strath Taieri Community Board area for the Dunedin City Council's (DCC) 10 year plan 2024-34. Its primary objective is to signal to the DCC those priorities for our community, with the ultimate goal that they are programmed into the DCC's 10 year plan and funded by the DCC. These priorities are shown in section 3 of this plan.

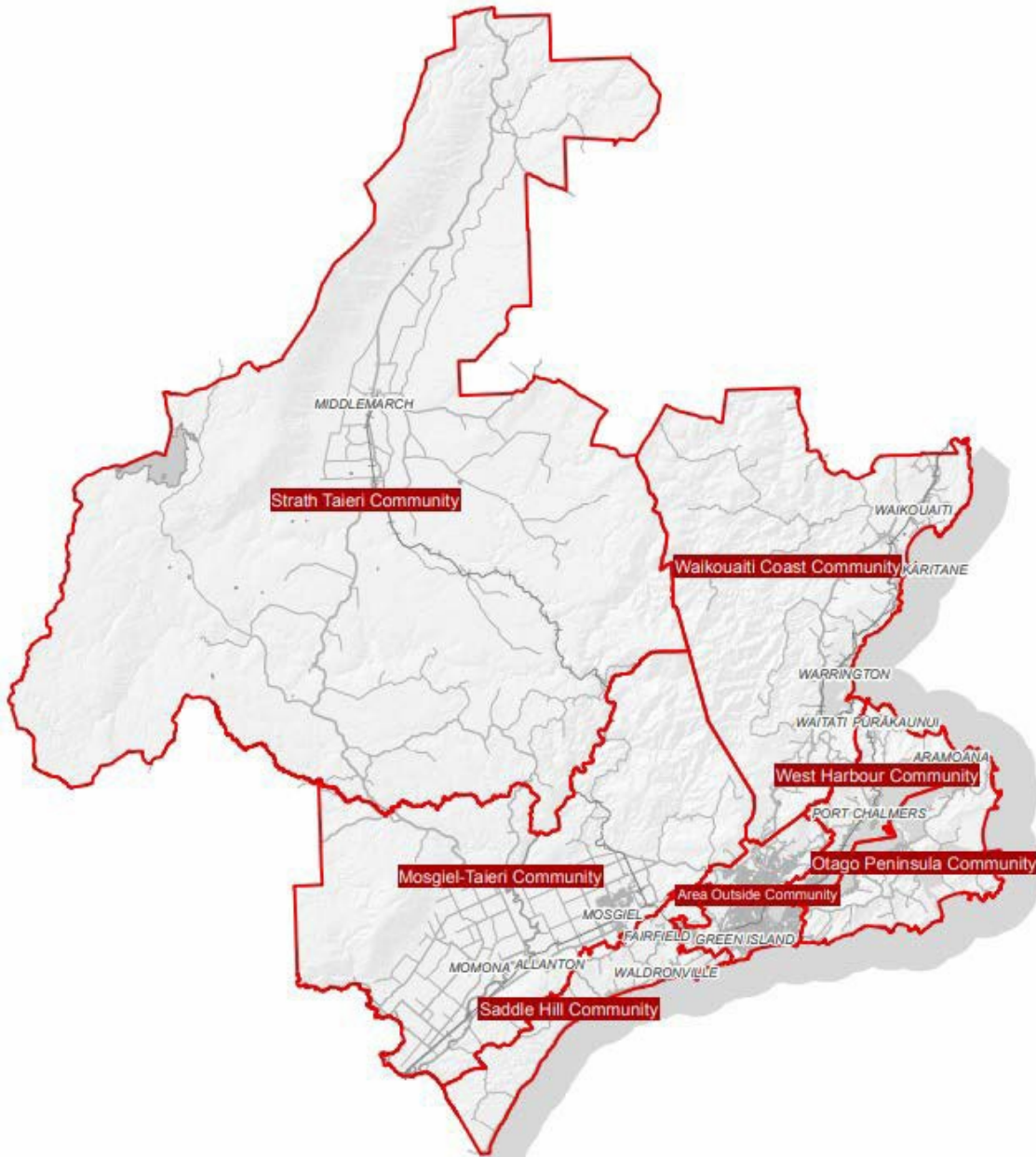
This Plan also includes activities that we, the Community Board plan to undertake. Our most important role is to be an advocate for our community, but we also proactively support our community in other ways, and these are set out in section 4 of this plan.

This Plan is subject to change and revision as needs arise and priorities alter.

2 KEY INFORMATION

2.1 BACKGROUND

The City of Dunedin has six Community Boards within its boundary, as shown in the map below.



Each Community Board has six elected members, and one councillor representative. The Community Board members are elected every three years as part of the local body elections. Community Boards must comply with the same rules and regulations as council, such as the Local Government Act.

The primary role of a Community Board is one of advocacy for its community. Each Community Board makes representations to the DCC on the priorities those boards have identified for their community area, that they would like to see included and funded in the council's annual plans and 10 year plans.

Any matters of an operational nature, e.g., the reporting of potholes, tree issues etc., are reported to council via the DCC's 477 4000 phone number, and do not form part of the Community Board's priorities.

Each Community Board holds public meetings every two months, and these meetings are advertised on the DCC website and in the Otago Daily Times. The meeting schedule for the 2023\0 calendar year is provided in Section 6 of this plan. The agendas and minutes from those meetings are also available on the DCC website at <https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/council/council-meetings/agendas-and-minutes>

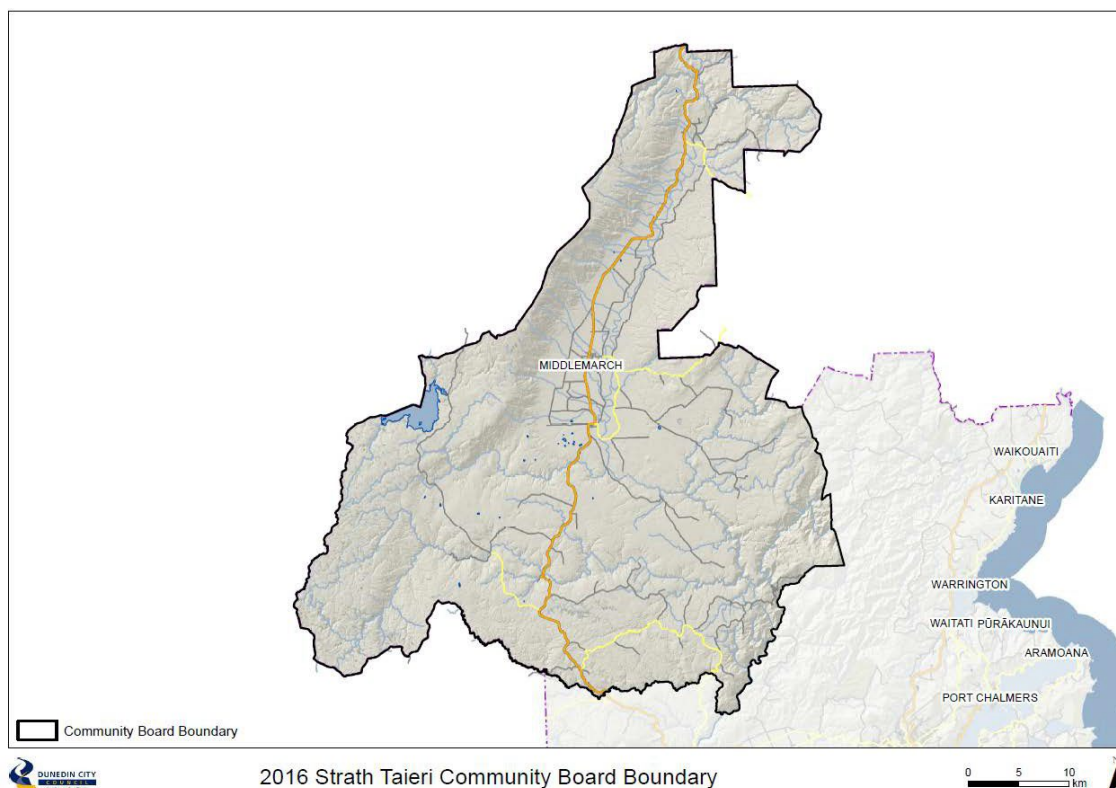
At the start of each meeting, there is a public forum session, which gives anyone from the community the opportunity to present to the board members their views on any topic. Anyone wishing to speak at public forum must make a request to speak at least two working days before the day of the meeting. They can do this via the Chair of the Community Board or contact a Governance Support Officer at the DCC at governance.support@dcc.govt.nz.

2.2 BOARD MEMBERS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Board members for the 2022-2025 triennium are as follows:

Name	Cell phone	Email
Terina Geddes (Chairperson)	027 200 5688	hayden.terina@xtra.co.nz
Ken Bain (Deputy Chairperson)	027 474 3338	kenandalison@outlook.com
Donna Hall	021 993 124	donna.m.hall@outlook.com
Quentin (Soddy) MacLeod	021 417 246	offtherailshoney@gmail.com
Bruce Thomas	027 484 6730	goose.t@hotmail.com
Robin Thomas	021 477455	robin.thomas@xtra.co.nz
Brent Weatherall (Councillor representative)	021 192 4549	brent.weatherall@dcc.govt.nz

2.3 MAP OF STRATH TAIERI COMMUNITY BOARD AREA



2.4 OUR COMMUNITY

The “rural hub” of Dunedin City Councils six Community Board areas, Strath Taieri, is located an hour's drive inland from Dunedin on scenic State Highway 87.

Straddling the wide climatic clines of the dry inland basins of Central Otago to the wetter coastal eastern foothills, the district covers some 211,500 hectares stretching 65km from north to south and 55km from east to west. Being in an expansive remote rural setting, it features a widely dispersed low per capita population density of just 0.32 people/square kilometre. This aspect alone creates social and infrastructure challenges unlike any of our other Community Board areas.

Several distinct areas exist within the region from the broad fertile developed flats and terraces adjacent to Middlemarch, the physically dominant slopes of the [Rock and Pillar range](#), to the tussock clad northern portion of the Lammerlaw and Lammermoor ranges. These all provide an interesting and vibrant contrast with the broad rolling farmed ridges of Hindon and Clarks Junction and the stunning mid reaches of the Taieri River.

In pre-European times the area was important to local Maori as both a mahinga kai resource with moa and kanakana (lamprey) being sought as well as serving as a useful access corridor to the hinterland.

In later years gold mining (Hyde/Pukerangi) became important. Clarks Junction served those early gold miners as an important junction on their access route to other inland goldfields via the historic Old Dunstan Trail.

The spectacular landscapes offer visitors wilderness, tussock country, splendid vistas, striking rock tors as well as enjoyment of a busy farming district. Those agricultural opportunities that attracted our first settlers remain today as the backbone to our economy with fresh opportunities developing in tourism stimulated by the Otago Central Rail Trail and the recently created Central Otago Touring Route on SH87.

The stunning scenery, rural tranquility, many recreational opportunities, the laid back lifestyle and the friendly local residents are key components to the local lifestyle.

3 PRIORITIES FOR OUR COMMUNITY

3.1 Strategic Community Priorities for Middlemarch

Middlemarch is a small rural township that serves as the centre of the Strath Taieri community. Maintaining a vibrant and sustainable rural township requires continued investment in infrastructure, public amenities, and long-term planning that supports both residents and visitors.

The following priorities reflect key areas where investment and planning would support **community wellbeing, economic sustainability, safety, and environmental resilience**.

1. Flood Management and Waterway Maintenance

Priority Level: Very High

Flood protection remains the most important issue for residents of Middlemarch. The community requires reassurance that the township will not face further flooding due to reduced water flow through the township.

Particular concerns include the **narrowing of March Creek through the township** and the **confluence of March Creek with the Taieri River**. These areas require ongoing maintenance, monitoring, and clearing to ensure water can flow freely during heavy rainfall events.

Addressing these issues is critical for protecting **homes, businesses, infrastructure, and farmland**. Strong flood mitigation planning would also improve community confidence and resilience in the face of increasingly unpredictable weather events.

Community Benefits

- Protection of residential properties and infrastructure
 - Increased community resilience to climate and weather events
 - Reduced long-term repair costs from flood damage
 - Greater security for businesses and investment in the township
-

2. Speed Limit Adjustments and Road Safety Improvements

Priority Level: High

Improving road safety within the township is an important priority for residents.

Adjusting the placement of the **50 km/h speed limit signs** could significantly improve safety for residents, pedestrians, and visitors.

Suggested improvements include:

- Moving the **northern 50 km/h sign approximately 200 metres further north** to slow traffic earlier when entering the township. This would improve safety for residents entering and exiting **Milford Street** and reduce vehicle speeds near the **school and swimming pool**.
- Moving the **southern sign approximately 50 metres further south** to maintain lower vehicle speeds past the **showgrounds and local café area**.

These relatively small changes could greatly improve safety in key areas of community activity.

Community Benefits

- Improved pedestrian and road safety
 - Reduced accident risk near the school and recreational facilities
 - Safer access for residents entering and exiting side roads
 - A more welcoming environment for visitors and families
-

3. Cycle Trail Continuation – Middlemarch to Pukerangi

Priority Level: High

The proposed continuation of the cycle trail between **Middlemarch and Pukerangi (approximately 16 km)** would create a safe and user-friendly connection to the Taieri Gorge Railway experience.

This route would **operate alongside the existing railway line and would not remove the rail corridor**, allowing both attractions to complement each other. By aligning with the current railway timetable, cyclists travelling the route would likely need to **stay overnight in Middlemarch**, creating additional demand for local accommodation and hospitality services.

Strengthening Middlemarch's position as a gateway to the **Otago Central Rail Trail and Taieri Gorge tourism experiences** would further establish the township as a destination rather than simply a stopping point.

Community Benefits

- Increased tourism visitation
 - Economic growth for local accommodation and hospitality businesses
 - Job creation and support for small businesses
 - Encouragement of low-impact, sustainable tourism
 - Greater utilisation of existing tourism infrastructure
-

4. Restoration and Future Use of the Middlemarch Railway Station

Priority Level: Medium

The Middlemarch Railway Station is an important historical asset for the community and an iconic feature for visitors arriving on the Taieri Gorge Railway.

Community consultation should be undertaken to determine the **long-term future of the building**, with the goal of restoring and maintaining it to a higher standard.

Once restored, the building could serve as a **multi-purpose public space**, potentially hosting community events, visitor information services, exhibitions, or supporting heritage tourism initiatives.

There may also be opportunities to work alongside the **Heritage Railway Trust** to support the preservation and interpretation of the area's railway history.

Community Benefits

- Preservation of an important heritage building
 - Expanded community space for events and gatherings
 - Strengthening the township's tourism identity
 - Opportunities for heritage education and visitor engagement
-

5. New Multi-Age Public Playground

Priority Level: Medium – High

Middlemarch's existing playground is well located near **public toilets and State Highway 87**, making it a convenient stopping point for visitors.

However, the current playground equipment provides **limited play opportunities for different age groups**. Expanding the playground to include **multi-age play equipment** would better cater to families travelling through the area.

Middlemarch sits approximately **one hour from Dunedin**, making it an ideal stop for families travelling the Central Otago tourist route. Providing an attractive playground would encourage travellers to stop, take a break, and spend time in the township.

Community Benefits

- Increased visitor stops and tourism spending
 - Improved recreational opportunities for local children
 - Encouragement of family-friendly tourism
 - Support for nearby cafés and local businesses
-

6. Township Improvements and Public Amenities

Priority Level: Medium

A well-maintained township contributes to both community pride and visitor experience. Residents of Middlemarch deserve public spaces that are tidy, functional, and welcoming.

Key improvement areas include:

- Maintenance of **trees, drains, ditches, and footpaths**
- Adequate **public rubbish bins and waste facilities**
- Continued upkeep of **public spaces and recreational areas**

Additionally, establishing a **centrally located recycling facility with 24-hour access** would provide a more convenient and environmentally responsible option for residents.

Community Benefits

- Increased community pride and wellbeing
 - Improved environmental sustainability
 - Better visitor experience for tourists
 - Encouragement of responsible waste management
-

7. Future-Proofing Facilities for an Ageing Community

Priority Level: Medium

Like many rural communities, Middlemarch has a growing ageing population. Ensuring residents can continue to live in the community requires accessible local services.

A **multi-purpose community facility** could potentially include:

- A **doctor's consulting room**
- Space for **visiting dentists and health professionals**
- **Meeting rooms for community groups**
- A **fitness or wellbeing centre**

Providing flexible community infrastructure would improve access to services and strengthen the social fabric of the township.

Community Benefits

- Improved access to healthcare services

- Support for healthy ageing within the community
 - Increased social connection and community engagement
 - Reduced travel requirements for residents
-

8. Community Housing Development

Priority Level: Medium – High

Access to **warm, quality housing** is essential to attract new residents and workers to rural communities.

Supporting the development of additional housing in Middlemarch could encourage families and workers to relocate to the township. Increased population helps sustain key services such as the **local school, medical services, hospitality businesses, and recreational facilities**.

Over time, increased population stability could also support the development of **aged-care or rest-home services**, enabling residents to remain within their community throughout all stages of life.

Community Benefits

- Population growth and workforce attraction
 - Protection of existing community services
 - Increased economic activity within the township
 - Long-term sustainability of the community
-

9. Regional Tourism and Recreation Connections

Priority Level: To Be Determined

Several proposed regional initiatives require further clarification, including:

- **Middlemarch – Sutton – Loganburn connections (Leaning Lodge and McPhees Rock)**
- **Outram – Middlemarch connections**

These ideas may relate to tourism routes, recreational trails, or regional transport links. Further information and consultation would be required before determining their feasibility and priority.

4 COMMUNITY BOARD PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

The following table identifies those activities that we as a Community Board would like to deliver to our community. They will be undertaken and funded by the Community Board.

ACTIVITY DETAIL	WHEN (IDEAL)
<p>Strategic Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review current use of community hall, and consider long term priorities with possible significant hall upgrade (or potential replacement) (15/20 year time frame); 2. Maintain engagement with community led group investigating Heritage Park concept – potential future use of Railway Station (Visitor/Information Centre?); development of Hub concept with linking Rail/Farming/Historic/Environmental themes etc and how these could support future community opportunities. <i>(Will require staff assistance)</i> 3. Establishing a strong relationship with Dunedin Railways. 	<p><i>Over term of current Board</i></p>
<p>Railway Issues</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wingatui to Middlemarch – Advocate for the public retention of the complete railway line and infrastructure – including support for ongoing rail service/linkage between Dunedin and Middlemarch; 2. Middlemarch/Sutton/Pukerangi Stations - Advocate strongly for formalised local control of all infrastructure including buildings; 3. Investigate implementing a formal “heritage precinct” (Heritage NZ) around Railway Station and all associated buildings and structures. <i>(Will require staff assistance)</i> 	
Promote Community Resilience	
Rural Waste Day	
Concept plans for cohesive Township development including entranceway development	
Establish a Strath Taieri Tree Management Plan – cemetery, railway corridor, wilding pines and township trees	
Cohesive council contracts – to prevent duplication and look for opportunities within our community	
Refurbishment of the township’s bench seats.	

5 PLANS

The Community Board has a number of plans supporting its activities. Our key planning documents are discussed below:

5.1 EMERGENCY PLAN – COMMUNITY BOARD RESPONSE PLAN

Introduction

The Dunedin City Council has a statutory role, as does the Otago Regional Council, under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act to contribute to Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) within the district. As part of this whole-of-city function, the [Name] Community Board has responsibility for the interface between the community and Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management.

Our communities have a reasonable level of risk of flooding, fire, tsunami resulting in community isolation so pre-planning and management of a specific event will be managed by the Strath Taieri Community Board on behalf of Civil Defence. This role is supported by authorisations and delegations in the Dunedin City Council Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan.

Status

The Community Board on conjunction with Emergency Management Otago, have developed a Community Guide to Emergencies for Hyde, Middlemarch and Sutton.

5.2 Roadwork Schedule

Information on current notified road closures and the roadworks schedule (a weekly list of programmed works) for Council's maintained roads is available on the DCC website via these links <https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/news-and-events/public-notice/roadworks-schedule> and <https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/news-and-events/public-notice/notified-road-closures>.

5.3 Other plans

5.4 Have Your Say on the Community Plan

The Board is very keen to receive your comments on an on-going basis, and you may speak to your comments at any Board meeting. Members of the community are invited to provide feedback;

- *Verbally... by contacting a board member directly, anytime*
- *Written... addressed to the board, postal or email addresses below*
- *In person... to the board at public events such as Community Cuppa and Conversation*

Please clearly state the issue or suggestion you would like the Community Board to consider, or the specific action you would like to be taken.

Please send written communication to:

The Chairperson
Strath Taieri Community Board
c/- Dunedin City Council
PO Box 5045
Dunedin 9054

Email: Hayden.terina@xtra.co.nz

7 COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The table below provides details of the next Community Board meeting.

3 June 2026
5 August 2026
21 October 2026
2 December 2026