

DUNEDIN CENTRAL CITY

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR THE CITY CENTRE AND THE WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

FOR DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL

OCTOBER 2011

PREPARED BY

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This report is a summary of the outcomes of an extensive Inquiry By Design process. Many of the analysis maps within this report have been produced in a workshop context and are indicative only. Their main aim is to provide background to the Strategic Directions. The projects identified within this report should also be considered indicative only.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The outcomes of an urban design-led project aimed at revitalising the Dunedin Central City with a specific focus on the “Warehouse District” are summarised in this report.

The **Dunedin Central City Framework** project aims to lead to greater community cohesion and local pride, increased business vitality and improved environmental performance. The revitalisation of the city centre will in turn have a positive effect for the wider city of Dunedin, with flow-on effects for the Otago District.

In order to achieve this, project objectives are:

- Review of existing policy and outcomes of previous projects pertaining to the city centre;
- Facilitation of community and stakeholder visioning and consultation;
- Facilitation of a four day intensive technical Inquiry-By-Design workshop;
- Identification of issues, opportunities and possible development responses with conceptual design ideas; and
- Provision of a summary of propositions including implementation recommendations for staging agendas and District Plan changes.

The project has formulated the following vision for the central city:

- A vibrant, safe and comfortable city centre which balances pedestrian and traffic needs and offers enhanced family, visitor and student experiences.
- An upgraded Octagon that better responds to its heritage setting, active edges, small events and the need for green space.
- A flourishing arts precinct that benefits from stronger linkages between The Octagon and the improved Queens Gardens.
- A Creative Quarter with Queens Gardens at its heart which promotes creative, technical and innovative industries.
- A Warehouse District, which is a hive of employment, that builds on its heritage resource, robust character and attractiveness to urban living.

This Central City Framework proposes a measured and affordable approach that addresses a range of smaller and larger, often low cost, high return initiatives for the city centre. This is combined with laying the groundwork for an employment-based plan for the ‘Warehouse District’. These place-based initiatives are recommended under the six ‘Strategic Directions’ set out in the (draft) Spatial Plan:

- A Liveable City
- An Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient City
- A City that Enables a Prosperous and Diverse Economy
- An Accessible and Connected City
- A Vibrant and Exciting City
- A Memorable and Distinctive City

To be successful, the recommended investments aim to be visionary and inspirational, yet practical and realistic in terms of their feasibility. Design and planning responses within this report include a broad range of initiatives, including:

Reduction of the severance by the State Highways

The two-waying of the one-way pair south of the Leviathan Hotel is proposed, with Crawford Street as a calmed two-way city street with enhanced pedestrian and cycling amenities, and Cumberland Street as a State Highway with two lanes in each direction. This is aimed at reducing the severance that currently exists between The Octagon, and Queens Gardens and the Warehouse District.

Formation of a Creative Quarter

A new Creative Quarter is proposed which combines the arts industries, Queens Gardens and the Warehouse District up to Princes Street. If improved roading conditions can be created on Crawford Street, a strong pedestrian and public space network will connect up these areas. Analysis shows Dunedin has significant potential to grow and extend its existing design- and IT-based businesses if only the right conditions could be created.

George Street improvements

While the central city retail is not under immediate threat from shopping malls, it still needs to keep updating and refreshing itself to counter competition from other regional centres and to become more attractive for visitors. The framework proposes a series of small public space upgrades which are friendly to families, visitors and the elderly, and that can be done inexpensively. Proposals are also made to improve night time safety, lighting, taxi access and toilet provision.

It also gives suggestion to how the bus system may be adjusted to find a better balance between an effective public transport system, parking needs and some of the negative impacts in front of shops.

A wider network of open spaces for a range of activities and events

The framework suggests connecting a range of public spaces including Queens Gardens in order to offer Dunedin a richer central city events experience. This will also take pressure off The Octagon and reduce disruption. Some provisional ideas for The Octagon are proposed, but these are for future consideration as its large scale upgrade is not a priority. However, small extensions of the areas outside existing restaurants and cafes could be considered earlier.

These groups of proposals underpin the long term vision for the central city with implementation commencing in the short term.

The interactive and integrated nature of the project is envisaged to lead to a plan that has buy-in from the Dunedin community as well as Council staff. The initiatives amount to a considerable investment over the next decades in physical works as well as business and organisational actions. The earliest benefits resulting from these investments will be noticeable over the next few years.

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This section contains information about the project and this report



introduction SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 About the project

Dunedin City Council (DCC) is preparing an integrated Central City Plan (CCP) for Dunedin. The CCP will establish a vision for the central city and a strategic plan to guide development for the next 15 to 20 years. To initiate this process, the Council has developed a strategic vision for the Dunedin Central City. This framework is the outcome of place-based consultation, visioning and Inquiry-By-Design workshop process held between May and August 2011. This vision in the form of a high-level framework will serve as the major basis for a Council-produced Central City Plan.

Key issues considered include:

- Access, movement and transportation - the circulation of traffic, pedestrians, cyclists, provision of on-street parking etc. There are significant issues with the State Highway's one-way pair, public transport, pedestrian and cycle connectivity, and parking.
- The public realm - the design and presentation of public spaces, parks and streetscapes.
- Activities - the types of uses, location for specific clusters of activities, tourism, mixed use.
- Buildings / cityscape - heritage preservation and enhancement, encouraging quality architecture, disincentives to demolition, earthquake strengthening.
- Stewardship and sustainability - passing on a city to next generations that is even better than the one received.
- Leadership and management - the role of DCC.

A specific focus is placed on a regeneration area in the southern part of the central city, also referred to as the 'Warehouse District'. The area has experienced a long term decline due to a range of factors including (but not limited to) changes in the Dunedin economy and reduced demand, District Plan zoning restrictions, leasehold land tenure, severance caused by the current alignment of transportation networks, and deteriorating building stock. However, it is also considered that the area offers significant opportunities due to its proximity to the central

city, its unique and attractive heritage buildings and the potential for a range of new uses.

A more specific vision and precinct plan has been developed for this area, including a framework of changes required to realise the vision. In addition to the issues above, the precinct plan also addresses regeneration, a sense of place, and minimising the negative impacts of any changes on the main Central City retail area.

This framework document and the precinct plan for the regeneration area contained in it may be used as background document for the application for funding from the Regional Land Transport Programme.

The framework and vision is linked with the Council's Spatial Plan for the city which is currently being developed.

CONSULTANT TEAM

Urbanismplus Ltd is the main consultant for this project and its role has been to assist the Council by managing participants, facilitating workshops, generating urban design-based ideas and documenting findings. Urbanismplus has put together a team of specialist consultants who are, based on an extensive collaborative working relationship, exceptionally experienced at delivering highly integrated strategic outcomes through intensive workshop processes.

This team consists of:

- Pocock Design:Environment Ltd, Landscape architects and sustainability specialists;
- Prosperous Places Ltd, Employment specialist;
- Urbacity Ltd, Town centre and retail specialist; and
- TTM Consulting Pty Ltd, Transportation specialist.

Along with Urbanismplus and Dunedin City Council staff, these key consultants were involved in developing the work contained in this document.

Staff from the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) and the Otago Regional Council (ORC) were involved in strategic explorations of central city issues with an overlap into their respective jurisdictions.

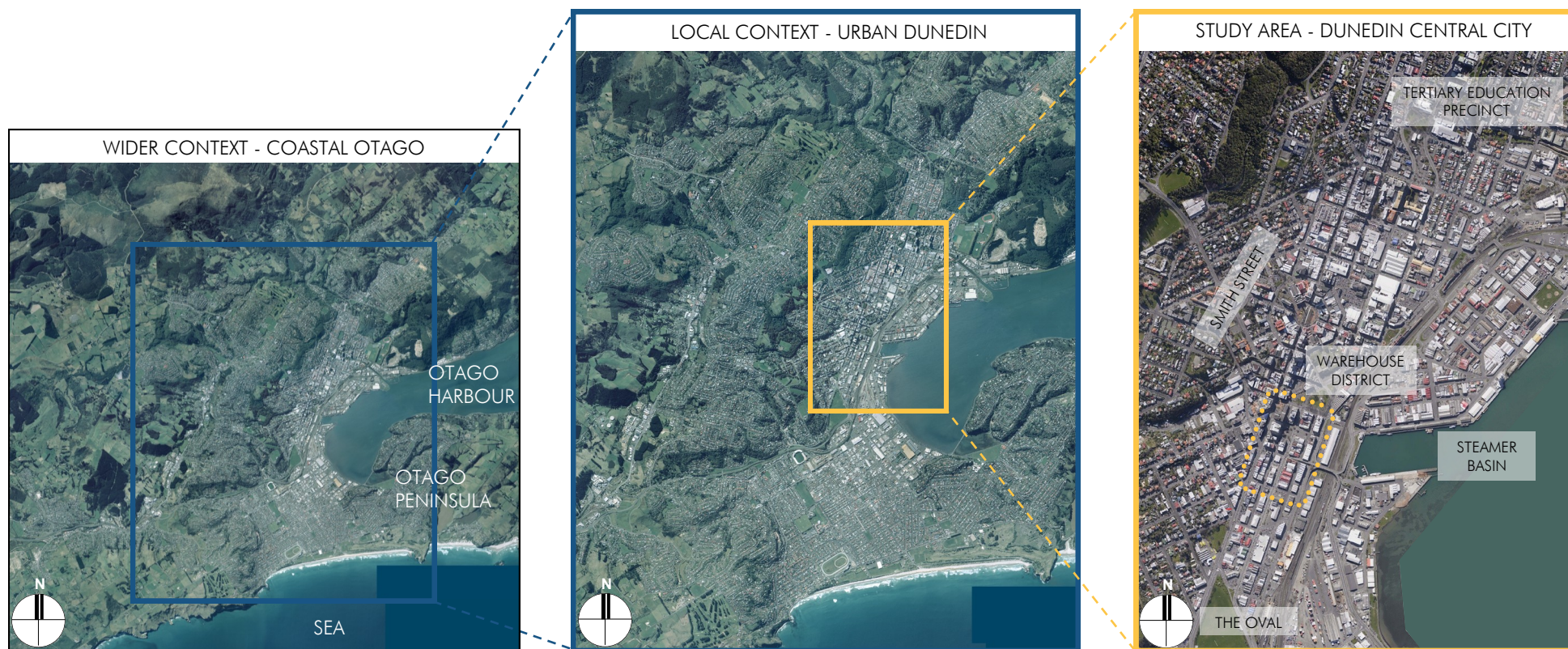
1.2 Project scope

The study area can be defined as the area which extends from the Tertiary Education precinct in the north to The Oval in the south and between Smith Street in the west and the Steamer Basin in the east. The study area is the centre of Dunedin City, which performs a role as the 'capital' and business centre of the Otago Province. It is located on the East Coast of New Zealand's South Island and more specifically the Otago Harbour separating coastal Otago from the Otago Peninsula.

The project has looked beyond the confines of the study area boundaries as appropriate to ensure that wider ecological, land use and transportation influences have been acknowledged and responded to. Being a mono-centric city, Dunedin's central area

performs a crucial role for all communities within and just outside Dunedin. Accessibility from surrounding areas is therefore an important consideration. The same applies to major strategic transportation networks, such as SH1 to Christchurch in the north and Invercargill in the south. SH88 forms an important connection to Port Chalmers, north-east of the City.

Specific consideration has been given to the Warehouse District, the area roughly bound by Princes, Rattray, Cumberland, and Police Streets, and centred on Vogel, Crawford and Bond Streets.



ABOVE FIG. 1-1: The wider context, the local context, and the Dunedin Central City study area, which includes the "Warehouse District"

1.3 Project process - an indicative timeline

		May 11 START	May 11	Jun 11	Jul 11	Aug 11	Sept 11	Oct 11	Nov 11	Dec 11	Jan 12
S	Scoping: 25 - 27 May 2011 Councillor and Council staff sessions		S						KEY MILESTONES → Project preparation → Relevant issues listed → Initial understanding of stakeholder needs → Constructive community engagement → Firm understanding of stakeholder needs → Briefings by Council staff on key issues, information → Place based design inquiry with Council staff and consultants → Preparation of report back presentation → Some detailed follow-up analysis by consultants and Council staff → Present workshop outcomes to Council and public → Feedback comments received → Preparation of a technical report (draft) → Preparation of a technical report (final)		
C	Consultation phase 1: 13 & 14 June 2011 → Stakeholder consultation sessions x 3 groups → Public meeting			C1							
W	Inquiry-By-Design: 14-17 June 2011 (in addition: Employment-specific: 1-3 June; Transport-specific: 28-30 June) Technical workshop Council staff and consultants			W							
R	Report preparation: July 2011 Internal reporting on workshop outcomes				R						
C	Consultation phase 2: 10-11 August 2011 Report back sessions with Council Report back sessions with the general public					C2					
R	Draft report: August 2011 Internal Council review					R					
R	Final report: August 2011 Finalising of report after reception of feedback							R			
C	Consultation phase 3 Material published on Council website for informal consultation. Formal consultation to follow.			INVOLVEMENT BY URBANISMPPLUS					C3		
	Implementation Implementation decisions will occur after completion of formal consultation procedures			INDICATIVE TIMINGS ONLY - SUBJECT TO COUNCIL PRIORITY SETTING							→

1.4 Project consultation

The project relied on input from interested members of the public and other stakeholders, such as NZTA and ORC. Focus group sessions and a formal public meeting provided key opportunities for this to occur. In addition to these formal sessions, several written and / or verbal comments from interested parties have contributed to a broad community input into the project.

Who has been involved?

Various working sessions were held with Dunedin City Council staff as well as the Mayor and Councillors over the period of 25-27 May 2011 in order to define the scope of the project and highlight the issues to build upon or to address in the Central City Framework.

Three Focus Group meetings were held on 13 June 2011 in the Art Gallery Auditorium to consult with key stakeholders on the issues pertaining to the central city of Dunedin:

1. Retailers and business operators located within the Central City.
2. *Your City Our Future* stakeholder groups: Representatives from various community organisations such as: emergency and other community services, sports, the natural environment, and heritage protection.
3. Key property interests. This included owners and developers of land and buildings within the Central City and the Warehouse District.

A public meeting was organised for community consultation early in the project process. This took place in the evening of 14 June 2011 in the Art Gallery Auditorium in Dunedin, and was attended by approximately 90 members of the public. Attendees were divided into 10 groups each around a table, and asked to



discuss, sketch and write their ideas on maps provided. This hands-on session was concluded with a report back per group and a brief reflection on the ideas presented.

A series of report back presentations and opportunities for feedback on 10 and 11 August 2011 involved the Council staff, Mayor and Councillors, key stakeholders and the general public.

1.5 Inquiry-By-Design workshop process

The core of the Dunedin Central City Framework project has focussed around an interactive, multi-disciplinary 'Inquiry by Design' (IBD) workshop. This workshop took place between 14 and 17 June 2011 in the Art Gallery Auditorium.

During the IBD process, the members of the consultant team were teamed up with the respective Dunedin City Council staff members, who provided local knowledge and continuity. Council participants included experts in:

- community planning;
- ecology;
- open space and recreation;
- economic development;
- infrastructure;
- heritage planning;
- transport; and
- town planning and policy.

The IBD approach enabled an extensive understanding of the wide range of issues and complexities facing the Dunedin Central City to be canvassed over a relatively short timeframe. The workshop pulled together technical specialists from many disciplines to identify and resolve the issues facing many different interests. The participatory nature of IBD also enabled an inclusive and consultative planning and design process that people could take ownership of.

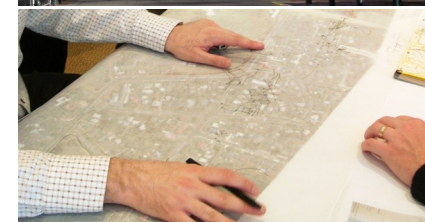
TECHNICAL
BRIEFINGS



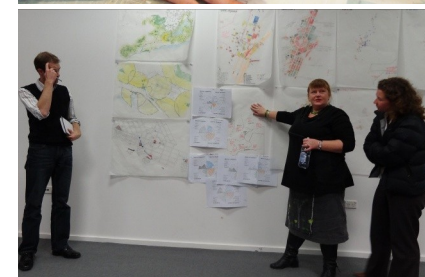
SITE
INVESTIGATIONS



DESIGN TEST +
BRAINSTORM



REPORT BACK



INTEGRATE



1.6 Report structure

In Section 2 the reasons for the focus on the revitalisation of the Dunedin Central City are introduced along with trends, opportunities and challenges, identified by the Council, consultants, the community and other stakeholders. This describes the context for the project and sets up the specific issues to be addressed in the analysis and outcomes.

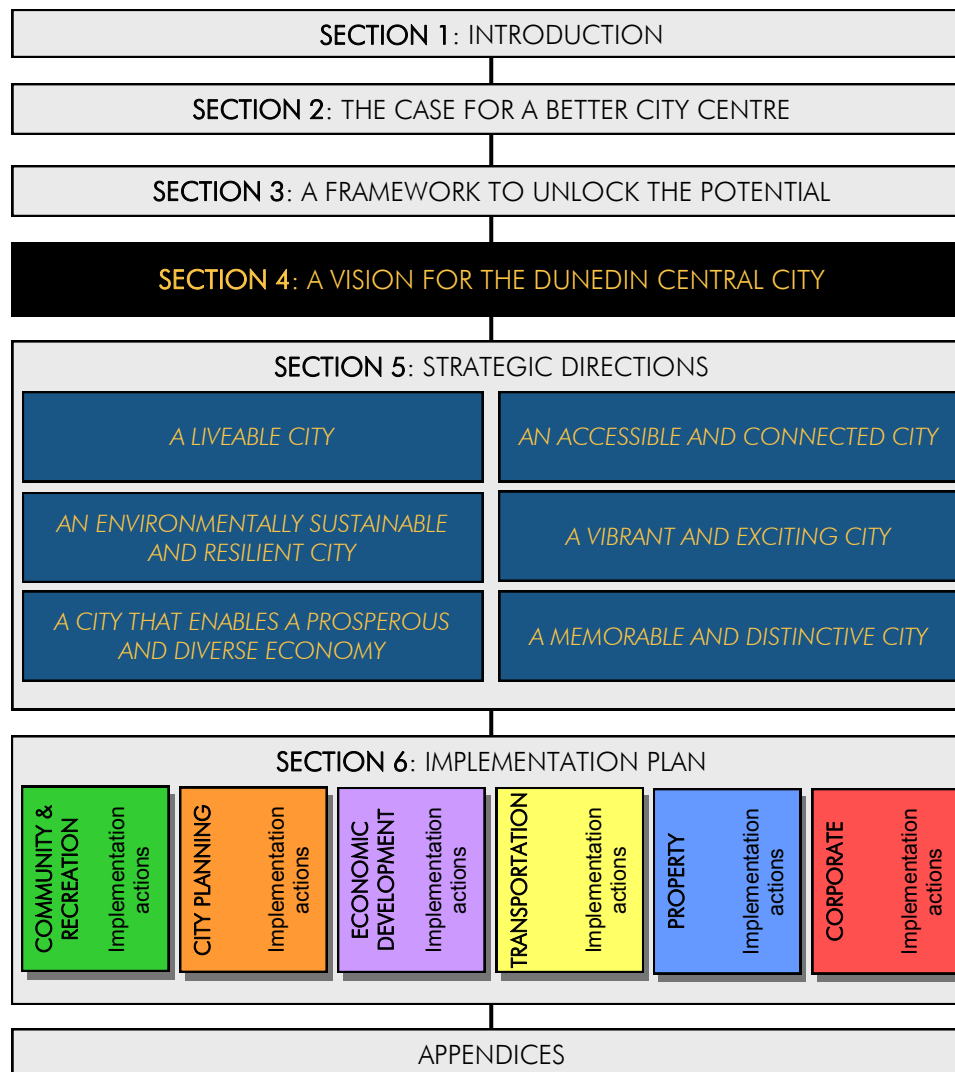
Section 3 explains the approach used for and the urban design principles applied to the project.

In Section 4 the Central City Framework is distilled to its essential elements and graphically summarised.

Section 5 explains the framework in depth. This section is organised along the headings of the Council's Spatial Plan (work in progress). This part of the report consists of both propositions and related analysis.

Section 6 outlines the practical implementation steps and proposed initiatives along with prioritisation and expected timelines. This section is organised per Council department, Community & Recreational Services; City Planning; Economic Development; Transportation Operations and Transportation Planning; and Property.

Detailed background material is provided in the appendices.



ABOVE FIG. 1-2: Structure of the report