

**This section explains the principles that underpin this Central City Framework and how it connects with other Dunedin City Council policies**



## principles to unlock the potential

## SECTION 3

## PRINCIPLES TO UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL

### 3.1 Place-making

This project is aimed at assisting the Dunedin Central City develop with a distinct and improved sense of place. This “place-making” approach integrates the widest range of issues possible in a manner that will distinguish Dunedin from other cities, enhance its appeal as a location to live, work and visit, deliver an attractive built form and provide a framework for future development opportunities. This approach is aimed at achieving outcomes that:

- have community support;
- achieve ecologically sustainable design objectives;
- respond appropriately to the regional context;
- promote economic and employment benefits;
- stimulate social activity;
- are viable and responsive to market conditions; and
- are practical.

#### PLACE-MAKING INFLUENCES WELL-BEING

Well-being and quality of life are linked to the ability of people to easily engage in social, economic, cultural, and environmental exchange around them. As all exchange occurs at some point in space, the built environment can play a large role in either facilitating or lessening potential exchange from occurring.

People will generally engage in more exchange when in a space they feel comfortable in. Well-being will accordingly be maximised if the city is thriving and provides a distinct environment within which people can strongly associate and readily feel ownership of.

The public realm (parks, roads, squares, and public buildings) is the main setting for exchange of all sorts. To maximise exchange, the public realm needs to be as convenient, comfortable, and safe as possible. The way in which private activities relate to it is just as critical as the design quality of the public realm itself.

#### GUIDING DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR “PLACE” CREATION

The following components are factors that can contribute to the creation of high quality ‘places.’ The focus should be on delivering outcomes that provide opportunities for:

##### ***Socially active and safe environments***

- well-used public spaces which promote social contact, e.g. The Octagon, Queens Gardens, The Exchange and the edge of Steamer Basin;
- connected streets where motorists provide surveillance of pedestrians and property;
- parks which are prominent and visible from streets and buildings, e.g. Queens Gardens, and places on Princes Street and potentially Crawford Street; and
- properties and parking areas which are visible to residents, other users of buildings, and passers-by, which help deterring property vandalism, burglary and car theft.

##### ***Integration with the wider community***

- good street links to specific sites and locations, such as The Oval, Market Reserve, the hospital, the university, the Polytechnic, the stadium, the railway station;
- overcoming / reducing severance effects generated by State Highways 1 and 88, as well as the railway line; and
- a street network providing safe access through locations with a pedestrian emphasis, such as The Octagon, The Exchange, the station area, George and Princes Streets.

##### ***Ecological responsiveness***

- the retention and enhancement of natural features, such as view shafts and valuable trees;
- focusing on the introduction of diverse, native trees and plants when considering new vegetation such as street trees and amenity plantings; and

- ensuring the provision of high quality, ecologically friendly storm water design.

##### ***Cleaner air and reduced car dependency***

- creating safe, interesting walkable environments within and around the central city and the Dunedin harbourside area;
- encouraging use of the bus by facilitating efficient and relevant routes, and user friendly facilities; and
- retaining or creating connections which encourage people to walk or bike to the centre, rather than travel by car.

##### ***Coping with change over time***

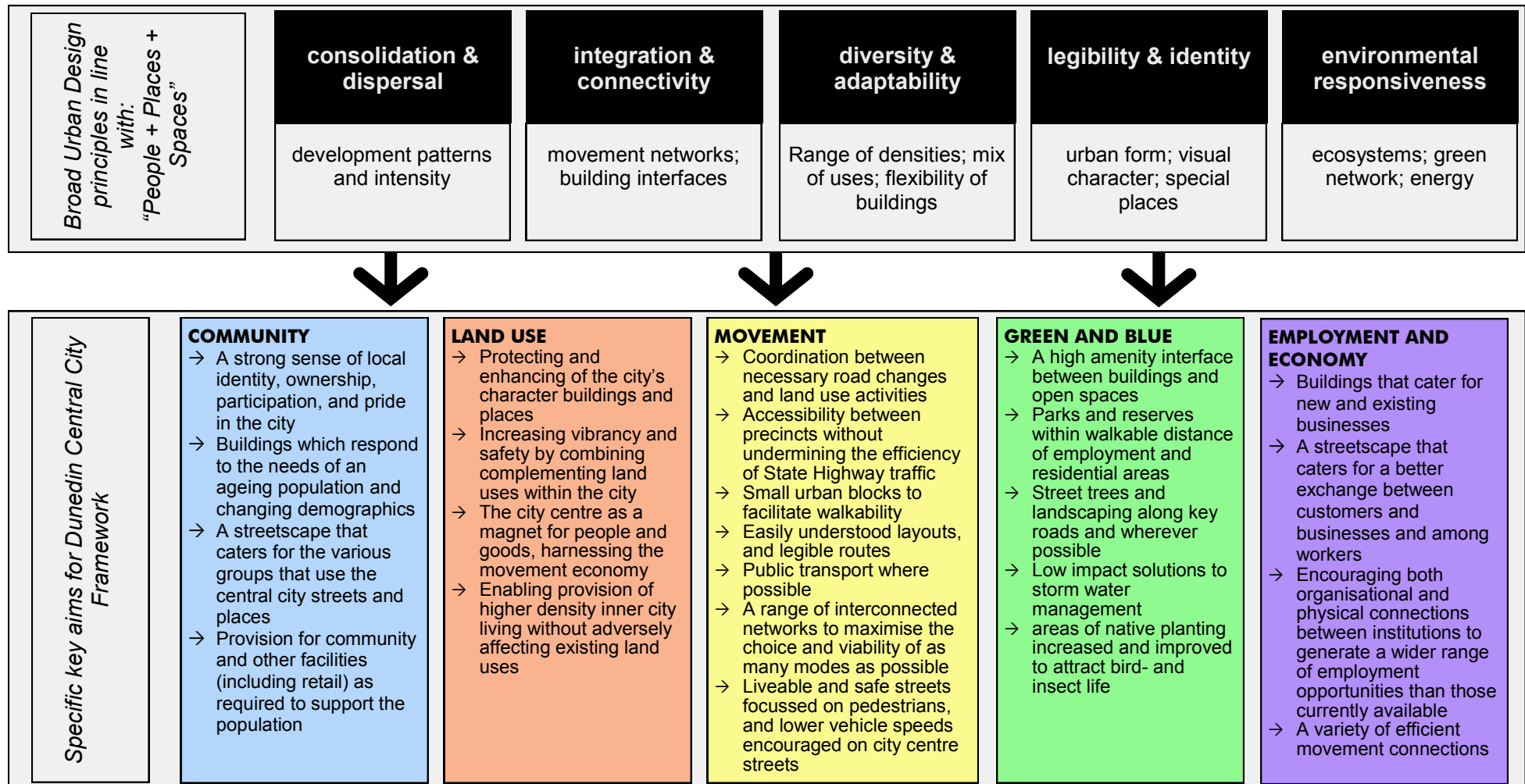
- a network of streets for flexible traffic management;
- streetscape designs coping with uses that can change over time;
- economically sustainable environments and buildings flexible enough to accommodate different uses; and
- saleable properties in high amenity environments.

Place-making extends beyond simple design techniques aimed at making an area aesthetically pleasing. It is underpinned by several broader objectives, aimed at delivering a holistic design response that enables wellbeing and prosperity.

### 3.2 Sustainable Urban Design principles

An approach based on New Zealand best practice urban design principles that can best embed and deliver sustainability into a built outcome has been used to drive the process. Using the five urban design principles of **People + Places + Spaces** (NZ Ministry of the Environment, 2002) has allowed a robust, defensible 'bottom line' to be established, against which the potential of the Dunedin Central City study area has been explored.

For this project, five technical 'themes' have been identified: community, land uses, movement, green and blue, and employment and economy. Within the broad principles more specific guiding principles apply to these themes. These are listed in the diagram below.



### 3.3 An integrated approach

An integrated approach has been applied to this Dunedin Central City Framework project to ensure that design is undertaken in a holistic manner and to avoid the risks associated with 'tunnel vision' or the artificial separation of intrinsically interrelated elements.

This project addresses a broad range of issues simultaneously, and in a way that cannot unintentionally be biased by single interests however praiseworthy in themselves, (for example traffic efficiency, heritage protection or local biodiversity).

This approach involves the core qualities of the environment (the 'quadruple bottom line'). Typical examples of integration include:

#### *Economic*

A connected street network that offers economic benefits through the efficiency of traffic movement as well as social benefits by providing greater personal safety as a result of the wide-spread presence of motorists offering surveillance.

#### *Ecological*

Features that are celebrated and integrated into urban environments rather than closed-off or destroyed can enhance the recognition and identity of the city, as well as adding value to the streetscape and the built form through better visual and aesthetic amenity.

#### *Social*

Coordinated land uses and efficient movement connections provide the greatest potential for social services to be accessible and relevant to their users. Employment opportunities are also a critical component of engendering social pride and well-being.

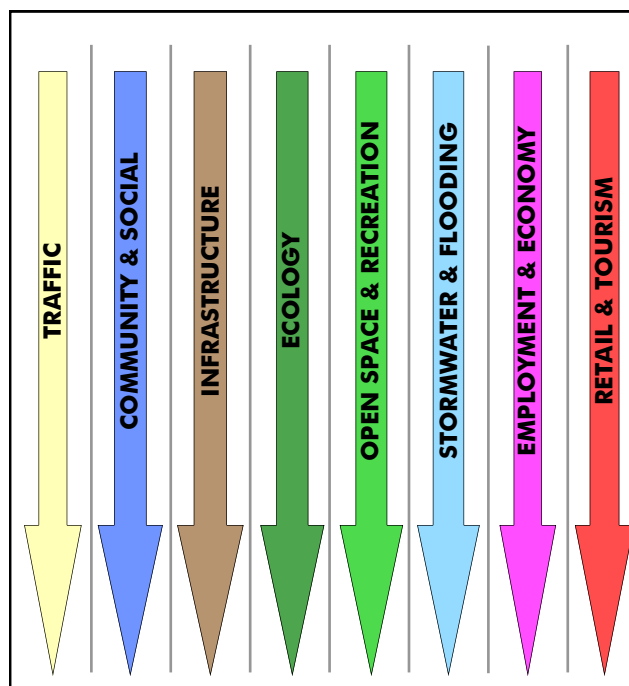
#### *Cultural*

Celebrating heritage is often accompanied by increased economic opportunities, e.g. in the form of character office space. The framework must also be relevant to all cultural and ethnic groups, providing them with ownership and identity in the streetscape and built form.

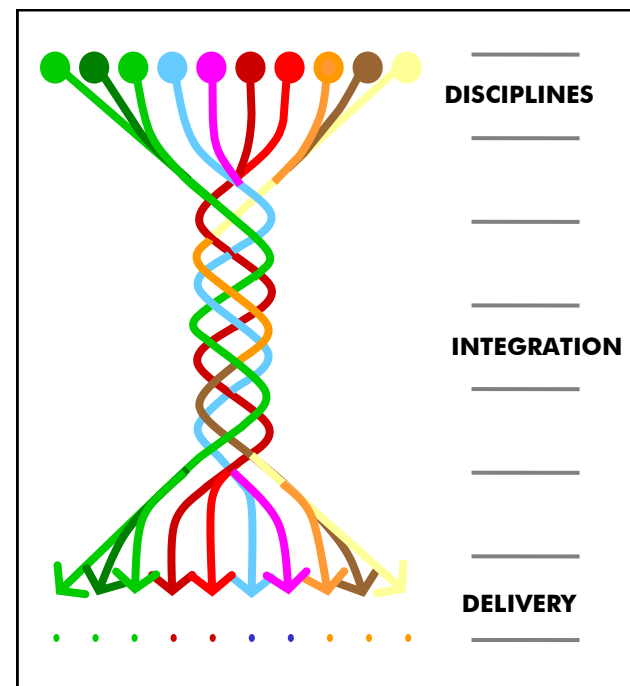
#### INTEGRATION OF DISCIPLINES

The project has involved the technical specialities that each partially manage spatial planning and the built environment.

Figure 3-1 illustrates the traditional 'silo-based' approach, in which each discipline tries to resolve its own issues and achieve its objectives in isolation from other disciplines. This is in contrast with the integrated approach (refer to Figure 3-2), in which each relevant discipline seeks to achieve their objectives in dialogue with other disciplines, leading to richer outcomes and synergies.



ABOVE FIG. 3-1: Traditional 'silo-based' approach



ABOVE FIG. 3-2: Integrated approach

### 3.4 Connecting with other Dunedin City Council strategies

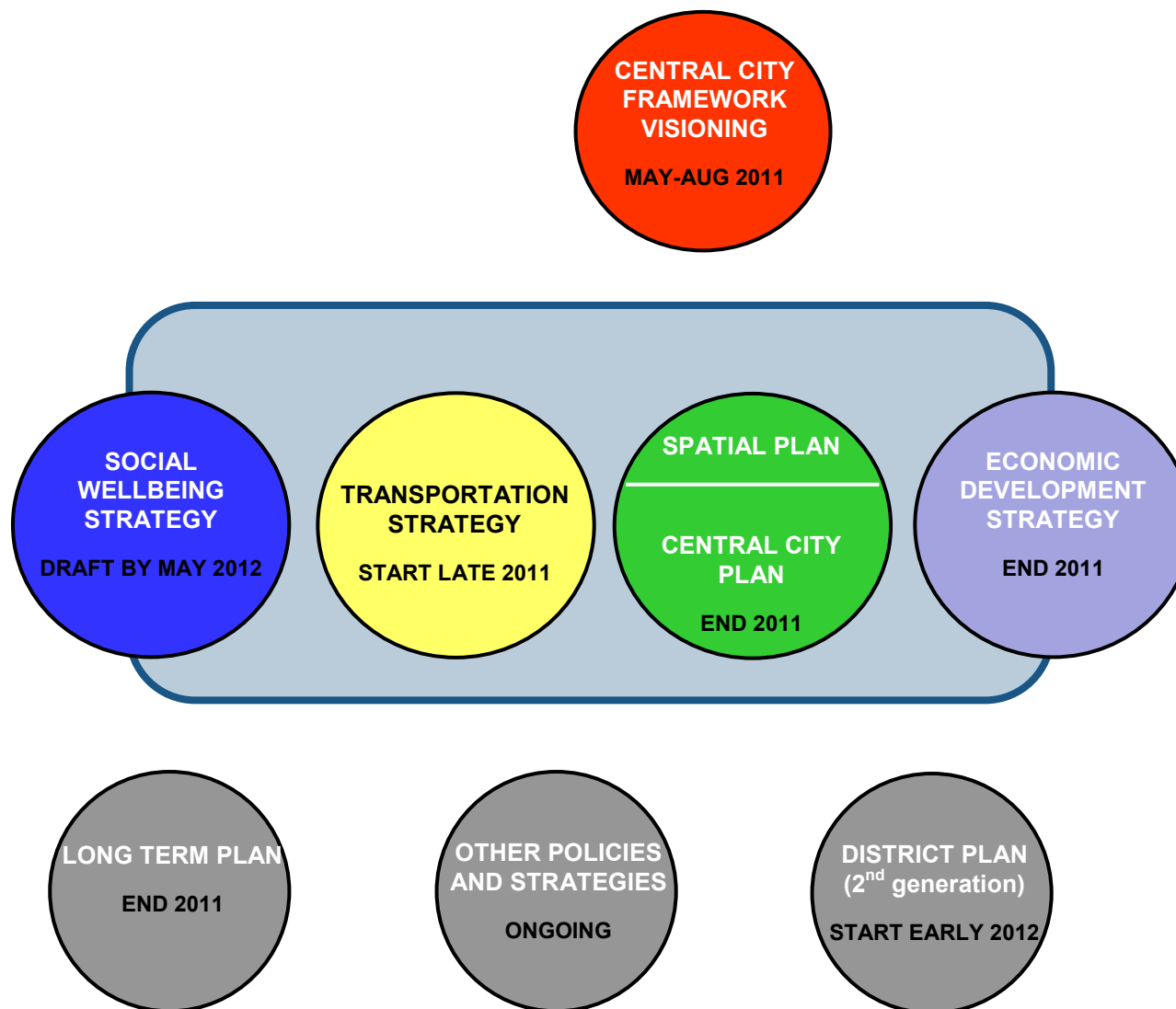
The Council is currently working on its Spatial Plan *Dunedin Towards 2050*, which sets the strategic direction for Dunedin's growth and development for the next 30 years. The spatial plan ensures a clear and shared vision about what type of city is desired. This vision will guide land use planning, infrastructure provision, and facilities and services provision.

This Central City Framework is a visioning document with a specific focus on the central city that feeds into the draft Spatial Plan. At the same time several of the findings and recommendations directly influence other strategies including the Transportation Strategy, the Economic Development Strategy and the Social Wellbeing Strategy.

Through its input into the Spatial Plan, this Central City Framework influences a large amount of the Council's policies and actions.

*Dunedin towards 2050* is a high level, non-regulatory plan. The individual policies and actions of the Spatial Plan will need to be implemented through Council's existing and future strategies and plans, and can be subject to change and refinement through those more detailed processes. One of these processes is the District Plan review, planned to start in 2012. The Spatial Plan also informs the development or evaluation of new policies or projects for inclusion in the Long Term Plan, Transportation Strategy, the Central City Plan, suburban Centre plans (e.g. South Dunedin Retail Centre Revitalisation Plan), and specific projects and initiatives.

*Refer to Appendix 5 for other background studies and policy documents that have informed the Central City Framework visioning process. Possible future updates of some of these documents will in turn be influenced by this project.*



### 3.5 From principles to Dunedin-based solutions

Simply collating strategic ambitions, albeit based on good principles and values, is unlikely to make the central city a better place. What Dunedin needs is a set of actions and steps that are practical, realistic, affordable, understandable and well-accepted.

#### ANALYSIS

Fundamental to this urban design-led Central City Framework are:

- A framework of broad and generic urban design principles and values, based on best practice and experience gained over time and in a wide range of places worldwide.
- Analysis to gain a full understanding of specific Dunedin-based technical data, employment and population growth projections, traffic flows, retail performance figures, ecological indicators etc.
- Analysis of Council policies and strategies and knowledge of local (sometimes conflicting) aspirations and visions of the community and other stakeholders.

This has led to compilation of a full picture of the current state of the city centre in the form of a range of issues, opportunities and constraints.

#### ACTION

To ensure that a fully balanced view and understanding of the issues associated with the central city was taken, the six *Strategic Directions* from the Spatial Plan have been formulated, loosely associated with particular disciplines such as: community; environment; employment; retail; public space; movement; and heritage planning.

Each of these directions forms the umbrella for a number of a group of concrete actions and initiatives that together form the Vision and guide the identification, prioritisation and measurement of detailed physical works and administrative interventions. These are described in greater detail in **Section 5**.

Each initiative is designed to be mutually reinforcing to the other initiatives to ensure that multiple advantages for the central city are gained from every proposed investment decision. For example, if focus is placed on changes to the road network within the city centre under the Strategic Direction of 'an Accessible and Connected City', benefits are also tried to be gained in other priority areas. The road design for instance could incorporate public gathering places (community), amenity to create an attractive employment environment (economic development) and street trees to provide shelter from the elements (environment) and so on.

**Section 6** presents the steps required to turn these strategic directions into actions.

