



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Project Name: Cultural Precinct Project**

Last updated: 17 August 2018

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#### **What is the Cultural Precinct Project?**

In 2017, Taupō District Council needed to vacate its former building at 72 Lake Terrace due to health and safety issues. Following community consultation on the 2017/18 Annual Plan on a number of options to address the issues from refurbishment to a new build, a new building was chosen as the council's preferred option. The development of the area by the Great Lake Centre near Story Place was then chosen as the preferred site. During the process the council recognised an opportunity to 'do it once and do it right' and approved the development of a masterplan for the area to see what efficiencies could be made, what opportunities could be capitalised on and to future proof any development going forward. This includes opportunities for new cultural, arts and heritage facilities to replace the existing Taupō Museum.

#### **Who is working on the project?**

The project is being led by a dedicated project manager, Philip King, who is working with the master planners representing Warren and Mahoney and Boffa Miskell.

#### **How were the master planners chosen?**

The council ran a competitive Expressions of Interest process and the planners were ranked against a number of key criteria. The top two were invited to present to the council and the successful application was chosen based on the quality of their presentation.

#### **Why that site?**

The area by the Great Lake Centre was chosen because we manage the land, there are opportunities to combine a number of functions to make efficiencies, and to create a main focal point for Taupō. Its central location also means it is easily accessible to the community and will add vibrancy to the central business district.

#### **Is it just about a new council building?**

No. It is about much more than that. It is likely the council's administration functions will be just one part of a wider concept that will capture our past, celebrate our present, and be a focal point into the future. The fact we need a new office building is simply an enabler to provide a cultural, arts and heritage facility the community may not have otherwise had as we can attract funding from external parties to contribute to the cost. If the plan recommends simply building an office building in the area by the Great Lake Centre we would not support it as we don't believe that would be the right site.

#### **Why do the council's administration functions have to be in town?**

In 2012 we amended the District Plan to make it easier to develop in the town centre and more difficult to locate retail and office activity outside the town centre. This decision was challenged and taken to the Environment Court, which upheld our decision. Town centres need a mix of activities to maintain vibrancy.

Ultimately, council's administration activities are no different the local accountant or legal businesses in terms of the value they bring to the town centre. We recognise that if we are going to push others to locate their office activities in the town centre for all these good reasons, then we also need to walk the talk and locate with all the other office activities in the town centre.

### **Why doesn't the council build its new building on the corner of County Ave and Spa Road or in the industrial subdivision?**

If the Council was to choose to build outside the CBD, or somewhere other than on its former Lake Terrace site for which it has already has a resource consent, it would need to go through the resource consent process. This could be a lengthy and costly process, and not in line with our vision of maintaining a vibrant town centre. It would also need to be publicly notified with no certainty of success.

### **Where will the funding come from?**

We have included funding of \$15.7 million in our 2018-28 Long-term Plan for a new building as a placeholder while the master planning work is carried out. Until the master planning work is completed, we do not know how much a cultural precinct may cost however it is our intention to look at outside funding sources for any additional funding. Similar projects in other areas have been successful in attracting one third of the project cost from the Crown and one third from other benefactors. We are hoping this project will attract the same. We will also consult with the community on the final plan and the likely costs to ratepayers before any final decision is made.

### **What about car parking?**

We are mindful that car parking is considered by many to be at a premium in the Taupō CBD. Car parking requirements will be given due consideration by the master planners and project delivery team. There has been some talk about the effect of having all the council staff parking in the area but our staff have been parking in the CBD since we relocated 12 months ago so that effect is already there.

### **How much green space will be affected?**

We are not intending for any major construction work to take place on the northern side of the Great Lake Centre.

### **What about the clubs using the area such as the bowling club and others?**

All of the clubs on Tongariro Domain have limited time leases as the reserve management plan says that they could be relocated in the future to allow for better development of the domain. By creating the master plan, we will have guidance on the longer term future of the reserve and that may give them some certainty about whether they can stay in their current locations and for how long. No decision has been made but we are having and will continue to have regular conversations with the clubs as the project progresses.

### **What is the planning process and how long will it take?**

Council engaged Warren and Mahoney/Boffa Miskell to undertake the master planning work and consultation with the community has begun. The plan is expected to be completed by December 2018, with further consultation with the community early next year.

### **Where are the sketches?**

There are none yet. We are only in the initial planning phase of the project. Any draft sketches or artists impressions are not expected until after this phase of the process is complete.

### **When can I have an input?**

There will be a number of opportunities to give further feedback as the project progresses.

### **When will a new building be built?**

It is likely to be the 2021/22 financial year, depending on the outcome of the master plan.

### **Why do we need a new museum and art gallery?**

The Taupō Museum building is not fit for purpose and does not meet current and future requirements for the on-going protection, care and display of the district's heritage. The building for the most part is not insulated and, when combined with open spaces and low tech environmental controls, there is a high risk of deterioration or damage to the artefacts due to seasonal variances in temperature and humidity. This limits the opportunities for receiving and displaying touring exhibitions and precious artefacts.

The electrical system needs updating and access to the building for maintenance is often difficult. The storage space for collection items and materials is at capacity, including the offsite storage and the museum currently has a moratorium in place due to lack of space to receive, store and display new artefacts.

There is no wet room and workspace for the planning and preparation of new displays, exhibitions and programmes, limiting the exhibitions, events and programmes that are offered.

### **Is there anything wrong with the library?**

The current library has served us well but the way libraries serve their community has changed somewhat since the library was built. There are efficiencies that can be gained by adopting a modern approach and also better serve our community.

### **If the Council office gets built somewhere else will there still be a new museum and gallery?**

Hard to say. This would be a separate project and would be subject to a number of factors including further community consultation.

### **Didn't Council look at this in 2010 and dismiss the idea?**

There was a similar project mooted back then but it was proposed to be on the north side of Tongariro Domain. That was dismissed following community feedback against the proposal. This proposal is quite different.

### **Why does Council need a new building for its staff, what's wrong with the current arrangement?**

The council's core administration staff are currently spread over six different locations which is not considered a long term option due to cost and inefficiencies. The council chamber is also in a temporary location.

### **Does this mean you will definitely be building in the area by the Great Lake Centre?**

No. While it is the favoured option of the three most preferred sites, the other two sites have not been dismissed and will be revisited if the project does not go ahead.

### **Has the Council already made a decision?**

No. No decisions have been made, other than to engage suitably qualified and experienced master planners to investigate the options and report back. That's why we want your feedback. There will be a number of opportunities to give feedback as the project progresses and for the Council to review the decisions already made.

### **What is happening with 72 Lake Terrace?**

The old building has been demolished and the area grassed. Lake Terrace still belongs to council and nothing further will happen with it until the outcome of the master planning process.

**What's the point in having my say? Will the council listen anyway?**

The Council recognises that community feedback is pivotal to the project's success. It wants to hear as many views as possible to ensure any development caters for our community in the best possible way, and we create something we can all be proud of both now and into the future.