

Part B Implementation



Actions and priorities

The Structure Plan goals will be achieved through a range of projects. Some will involve physical works, and others a planning and policy response.

Although the Structure Plan has identified the goals and how to achieve them, there will still be considerable work involved in refining the detail for the individual projects. This section provides a description of the key projects.

Physical works projects

These projects will result in physical changes to the town centre. The challenge with these physical projects is achieving a good balance between cost and impact – where can the greatest benefit be derived with the finances available.

They have been prioritised in recognition that not all will be able to be undertaken straight away. This prioritisation will assist the Council and community when considering which projects to place into future Long Term Plans.

The laneway improvements have been noted as ongoing projects. Whereas street upgrades are likely to be single or carefully staged projects led by Council, laneway improvements are more likely to be incremental and involve partnerships with private property owners. It is anticipated that a provisional sum will be provided through the Long Term Plans to support this.

Similarly, the monitoring of car parking demand is something that must be undertaken on an ongoing basis to ensure that emerging trends are recognised before too much pressure is placed on the existing car parking resource. The recently installed meter-eye monitoring system for car parks in the town centre will assist with monitoring ongoing demand.

Priority	Physical works project
Ongoing	Laneway and service lane improvements Monitoring of town centre car parking demand
Short term 2012-2017	Roberts Street area, streetscape improvements, road realignment and plaza Tongariro Street improvements Titiraupenga Street changes in priority for intersections Ferry Road improvements Heuheu Street improvements Redoubt Street realignment Story Place pedestrian improvements
Medium term 2018-2022	Ruapehu Street improvements Tamamutu Street improvements Horomatangi Street improvements Story Place extension to the Taupō Boat Harbour
Long term After 2022	Civic heart Second river crossing

Planning and policy projects

Further detailed planning will be carried out in a range of different planning and policy documents, to help implement the Structure Plan's overall planning vision. Some documents will require attention in the short term to ensure consistency with the overall implementation programme, while others will have regard to the Structure Plan's goals and directions at the time of their natural reviews.

The first policy document to be amended will be the District Plan. A change to the District Plan is required to zone the industrial land identified in the Structure Plan, and make amendments to some of the town centre performance standards. The District Plan is an environmental management document administered under the Resource Management Act 1991. It is an important support document because it provides the regulatory framework under which commercial and industrial activity can operate.

The Structure Plan can schedule upgrade projects for the public realm (streets, parks, squares etc) to improve function and amenity, but it also requires private investment and development to achieve the goals of activating public space and creating vibrancy by providing interesting commercial destinations. Reviewing the regulatory framework will ensure that all District Plan provisions are set at an appropriate level to manage environmental effects while encouraging urban redevelopment and commercial growth.

Other important documents include bylaws, reserve management plans, policies and strategies. They are all designed to assist with Council's regulatory role, and should be reviewed to reflect the higher level direction provided in this Structure Plan.

Planning project	Purpose
District Plan Change	Zone the industrial areas and make appropriate changes to the existing Industrial Environment Amend Plan provisions particularly in relation to town centre performance standards for parking and height
Concessions Policy	Ensure pedestrian needs are foremost maintaining unobstructed paths next to shop frontages and under verandahs. Provide flexibility for a range of uses, recognising the value of street vendors
Urban design guidelines	Provide assistance to developers in the town centre to ensure quality urban design outcomes
Wayfinding Strategy	Identify how signage and other spatial cues can more clearly provide direction for visitors throughout the town centre
General Bylaw	Ensure sign requirements provide for the needs of pedestrians, particularly the visually impaired
Parking Bylaw	Reflect changes to parking locations and management as a result of street upgrades
Tongariro Domain Management Plan	Reflect the higher level directions from this Structure Plan

Land use patterns (town centre and industrial)

In order to implement many of the initiatives that this Structure Plan proposes, changes to the District Plan will be required. The following discussion touches on these changes and the rationale behind them. The preparation and notification of the District Plan change is proposed to follow the adoption of the Structure Plan. This allows any amendments to the Structure Plan resulting from submissions and final decisions, to be incorporated within the District Plan work.

Town centre boundaries

The District Plan presently identifies the Town Centre Environment as all that land contained within Titiraupenga Street in the east, and the Waikato River to the West, and Roberts Street at the southern end to Waikato Street at the northern end. Within the Town Centre Environment, there is the "Pedestrian Precinct" which is that land between Ruapehu Street and Tongariro Street, and between Roberts Street and Spa Road. The rules and performance standards apply to all the Town Centre Environment, but in the "Pedestrian Precinct", additional performance standards require display windows at ground floor, and verandas above the footpath.

Both the Town Centre Structure Plan (2004) and this Structure Plan consider whether commercial growth should occur outside the existing zoned land, or whether it should be accommodated within the existing boundaries by redevelopment. Both Plans identified that there was sufficient land within the existing town centre to provide for growth in the foreseeable future.

There is also the land to the east between Titiraupenga Street and Kaimanawa Street, which is identified as Residential (High Density). This environment provides a buffer for fringe commercial activity, not as intensive as that found in the town centre. The Economic and Urban Design Analysis both recommend that the town centre boundaries remain in place to ensure consolidation and intensification, greater walkability and cycling opportunities, and vitality of the town centre.

The District Plan change therefore, will not seek to zone additional land for town centre expansion, other than the properties fronting the southern side of Roberts Street between Ruapehu Street and Titiraupenga Street which are currently Residential (High Density). This is a small but logical expansion to the Town Centre Environment, and will encourage redevelopment more reflective of the existing infrastructure and amenity in this location.



Looking south down Tongariro Street in the late 1970's

Proposed development pattern for the town centre



- Potential bridge locations linking to Waikato / Opepe Street
- Vehicular street (see pages 42 to 52 for further detail)
- Low-key road
- Flat land associated with events focused recreational reserve
- Open Space
- Civic Heart
- Retail Core
- Entertainment
- Taupo Boat Harbour (includes the Landing Reserve on the eastern side of the Waikato River)
- Secondary commercial
- Proposed plazas / squares
- Intensification of fine-grain and boutique retail along laneways
- Activity Nodes - pedestrian priority areas
- Mixed-use fringe
- Retail expansion
- Community and reserve oriented facilities
- Taupo Primary School
- Taupo Police Station and Courthouse

Industrial Zoning

The Structure Plan identifies land on the eastern side of Taupō town as appropriate for future industrial development. The study areas were generally identified for urban expansion in the Taupō Urban Structure Plan (2004), and confirmed in Taupō District 2050, the district wide growth management strategy (2006). This Structure Plan reviewed this earlier work, and carried out a land constraints exercise which then identified gross developable areas.

It is these gross developable areas which will be rezoned to Industrial Environment. In doing so, the northern land has been further identified as Industrial Environment (Heavy), and land shown in the Structure Plan as sensitive, has been identified as Industrial Environment (Sensitive).

The Industrial (Heavy) land is located adjacent to existing industrial activity on Centennial Road and Rakaunui Road. This area has had a history of planning for heavy industry, and existing industrial land generally consists of large allotments, and predominantly yard based industrial activity. The land is also located close to geothermal activity and primary geothermal resource users, so it makes sense to recognise this resource in providing for future activity.

Areas have been identified as Industrial (Sensitive) because they exhibit characteristics that will require more careful treatment than is necessary in other locations. For reasons such as prominent location, natural hazards, or gully formations, extra care will need to be taken at the time of subdivision and development.

The Airport is presently part of the Rural Environment. It is proposed to zone additional industrial land just to the north, as well as the existing airport to better reflect the current land use and range of existing airport activity (see map on page 23).

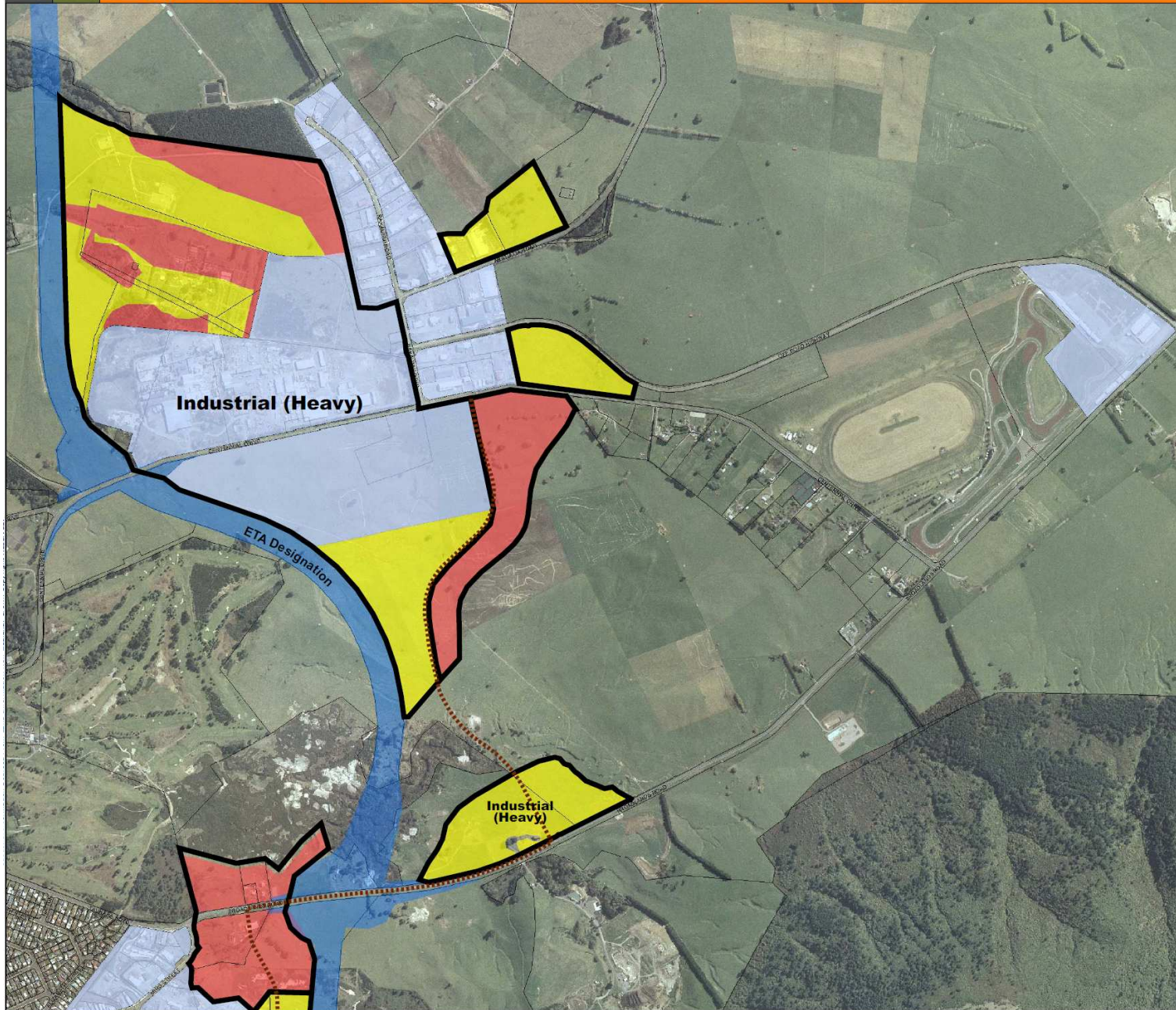
The gross developable areas have been identified through the economic report as generally being sufficient in land area to cater for the next 20 years of projected demand for this type of land. In addition, the Structure Plan process has also identified the extent of necessary future infrastructure upgrades. These upgrades are all able to be achieved, but will be costly, and the timing of infrastructural upgrades will be left to the market. This means that the landowner will be responsible for

the provision and cost of infrastructure, at the time of subdivision or development.

The Structure Plan also recommends a number of other industrial zoning provisions to be included in a District Plan change, to manage the subdivision of land and future land use activity. These include provisions to manage signage, landscaping and the amount of retail activity that may take place on a property.



Taupo Urban Commercial and Industrial Structure Plan



Landuse Maps

AREA 1
Centennial / Rakaunui Road Area

Legend

- Indicative Collector Route
- Existing Industrial Environment
- ETA Designation

AreaType

- Industrial (Sensitive)
- Industrial



Scale (A3) - 1:14,000 NZTM 2000

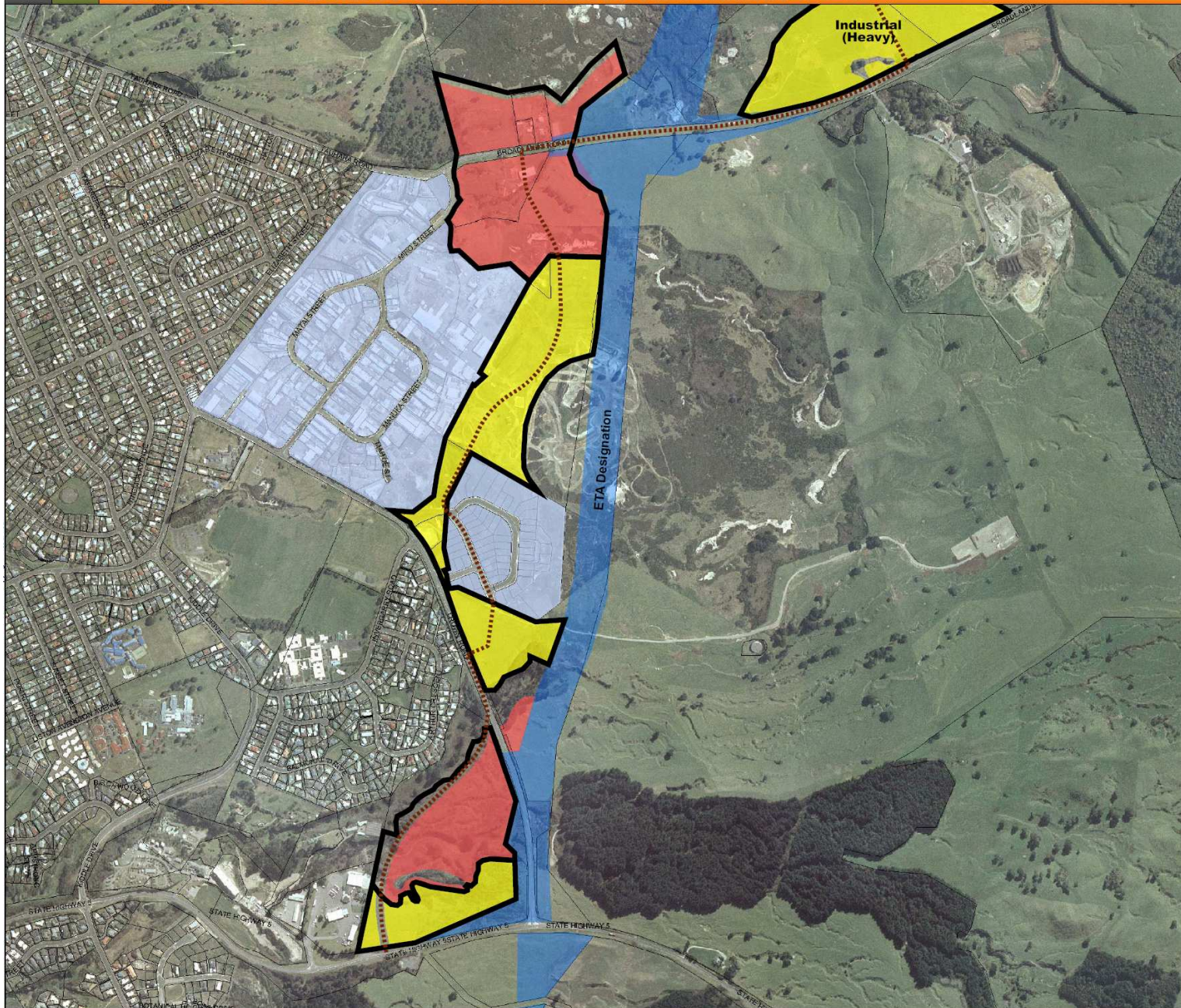
Map Author: Tracey May
Map Date: 26 August 2010
Map Location: V:\Policy and Planning\Structure Plan
- Commercial and Industrial\map documents\landuse



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Taupo Urban Commercial and Industrial Structure Plan



Landuse Maps
 AREA 2 - Between Broadlands Rd and SH5 (Napier Taupo)

- Legend**
- Indicative Collector Route
 - Existing Industrial Environment
 - ETA Designation
- AreaType**
- Industrial (Sensitive)
 - Industrial

150 75 0 150 300 450 Meters
 Scale (A3) - 1:11,000 NZTM 2000

Map Author: Tracey May
 Map Dates: 26 August 2010
 Map Location: V:\Policy and Planning\Structure Plan - Commercial and Industrial\map documents\landuse

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Taupo Urban Commercial and Industrial Structure Plan



Landuse Maps

AREA 3 - Airport Land

Legend

- Indicative Collector Route
- Existing Industrial Environment
- ETA Designation
- AreaType**
- Industrial (Sensitive)
- Industrial

140 70 0 140 280 420 Meters

Scale (A3) - 1:10,000 NZTM 2000

Map Author: Tracey May
Map Date: 26 August 2018
Map Location: V:\Policy and Planning\Structure Plan - Commercial and Industrial\map documents\landing

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Industrial land subdivision

It has been decided to zone all the land identified in the Structure Plan as Industrial (Unserviced) to allow the market the opportunity to determine timing of development. While Council will continue to plan for infrastructural upgrades as part of its Long Term Plans, ultimately it will be the responsibility of the land owner to arrange for service connections and any on-site infrastructure such as a stormwater disposal. This avoids Council carrying out costly upgrades that may not be required for sometime.

At the time of development, the landowner will co-ordinate with Council to identify the extent and timing of planned services, and the level to which they will be required to build infrastructure necessary for the proposed development. A description of the required services is provided in the Background section (page 75).

Subdivision of existing industrial zoned land will continue to be managed by the existing District Plan provisions. These provide for subdivision as a Controlled Activity, where it is demonstrated that the new allotments can contain a complying land use. Subdivision and development of land zoned as Industrial (Unserviced) will be a restricted discretionary activity where the application can demonstrate compliance with an infrastructure development plan showing the extent of necessary infrastructural upgrades. If an application for resource consent is not consistent with the infrastructure development plan, it may be processed as a non-complying activity.

There will be additional zoning provisions for the new Industrial Environment areas identified as "Heavy" and "Sensitive". In the case of the Industrial Environment (Heavy), it is proposed that allotment sizes be larger than allotments in other industrial locations to protect the land resource for larger footprint or yard based activity. It is proposed that new allotments be a minimum of 4000m², and any subdivision resulting in allotment sizes below this area will be a Discretionary Activity.

The Industrial Environment (Sensitive) has been identified for a number of reasons. This land will be more sensitive to subdivisions and the resulting effects of earthworks, infrastructure and roading. For this reason all subdivision will be a Discretionary Activity, to allow the full assessment of effects and discretionary consideration of the appropriateness of the subdivision proposed.



East Taupō Arterial under construction

Retail activity

Having established the need for more industrial land in the future, and having determined the most appropriate location for industrial land, it is important to ensure that the land is utilised in a way that achieves its purpose for the designed planning period. Uncontrolled retail growth can lead to increased uptake of this land, and may create in the future, a premature shortage. A shortage of industrial land is a serious resource management issue, because industrial activity can't easily establish in other environments where planning restrictions are generally focussed on activity with less environmental effects.

Many industrial activities have some form of sale or service which could be described as more commercial than industrial. However, the important issue is the nature and scale of the commercial activity. A showroom in conjunction with a manufacturing business can be an important component of the overall industrial operation. The sale of products that require a large outdoor area such as building supplies or even motor vehicle, boat, and caravan sales, are better suited to an industrial location, than the more intensive use of land required to be economical in a town centre.

The problem lies with general retailing operations selling similar goods as those found in the town centre, and which have no connection to the Industrial Environment other than the chosen site happens to be in this location. The more general the goods sold, the busier the retail activity. Some retail venues have a client focus, such as the rural sector. But others sell popular items such as household goods, to an unselected sector of the community.

Issues that arise due to the establishment of retail in the industrial environment are:

- Increased uptake of land which has been established for industrial use, and therefore creating the need to find additional areas for industrial growth
- Depending on the nature and scale of the retail venues considerable visitor trips can be generated. This can create friction of street traffic with industrial oriented traffic
- Onsite car parking is insufficient for peak times, and there is not the ability to rely on the large car parking pool as found in the town centre
- Reverse sensitivity issues can arise with the effects such as noise, dust and smell of industrial activities negatively impacting on retail activities
- Retail activity outside the planned commercial areas, particularly the town centre, can over time adversely affect the sustainability and vitality of the commercial areas
- Dispersal of retail operations throughout the urban area is not efficient or sustainable, causing unnecessary travel and congestion on the roading network

Retail activity outside the planned town centre, can over time adversely affect the sustainability of this commercial area. The town centre is a built resource containing costly infrastructure designed to support intensive land use. As a result, land prices are often high, and rates and leases reflect the level of services provided in these areas. It is therefore important that core retail and commercial services are located in the town centre to ensure its sustainable development and continued viability.

The town centre is an efficient place for commercial businesses to operate, for both operator and customer. Scattering retail venues around the urban area is not efficient or sustainable. There will always be some individual trips to certain commercial/industrial activity, such as hardware or bulk landscaping supplies. But when core retail becomes dispersed around the urban area, unnecessary travel is generated leading to increased costs of this travel to the consumer, and increased congestion on the roads.

To ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the Industrial Environment, and the continued vitality and sustainable management of the town centre resource, the industrial plan change will manage retailing in the Industrial Environment. As a trigger, the Structure Plan suggests retail activity should be ancillary to an industrial activity on the same site, and not involve more than 300m² of floor area.



The Hub, Whakatane, showing the uniform building footprint and large car parking areas characteristic of many large format retail centres

Land interface issues

Most of the new land identified for industrial activity adjoins other industrial activity or rural land. Where new industrial land adjoins residential activity, or is close to residential activity, there will need to be consideration given to providing a buffer or level of separation to ensure the effects of industrial activity are managed to minimise their impact.

Land at State Highway 5 and along Crown Road is close to residential activity, and the District Plan change will provide for buffer strips and zoning controls in this location. Land to the west presently zoned Rural will not be included in the Industrial Environment, but will be considered for a more appropriate zoning such as high density residential.

Advertising signs

At present there is no restriction on advertising signs in the Industrial Environment, other than the provision that requires all signage relate to the activity on the property it is located (ie no third party advertising). Unlike residential and rural environments, there is no limit on the size or number of signs that can be placed on a property.

This relatively relaxed approach to signage in the established industrial areas has not caused a problem to date, but the new industrial areas will be close to the East Taupō Arterial (ETA). This new road will provide an opportunity for the first time, to advertise beyond the front gate, and there is concern that a proliferation of advertising may lead to inappropriate land use, create an unnecessary distraction to motorists, and generally raise amenity issues.

Industrial activity does not generally rely on attracting passing trade in the same way as retail. Industrial activity generally advertises through other mediums, and signs on properties tend to focus on identification. People usually make a destination decision to visit the industrial area, and already know the address they want. Therefore signage is useful for ensuring identification of the correct address, but is not necessary for attracting the passing motorist.

In the Industrial Environment there is no need for signs to be visible from a distance, nor any need for signage to face the highway. The ETA

will be a national highway designed for transporting people regionally, and it is potentially dangerous to create unnecessary distraction to motorists from general advertising. Furthermore, activity that relies on such advertising, such as stand alone retail outlets, is not necessarily appropriate in the Industrial Environment in the first place.

It is therefore proposed to restrict signs to those that cannot easily be seen from the ETA, or perhaps require a setback for signs so that they are not visually obtrusive. The effective and efficient functioning of the Industrial Environment, as with any environment, is managed by ensuring that like activities are grouped in proximity to one another. Certain activities do not suit the Industrial Environment, because they bring with them characteristics that are not consistent with industrial land use. Restricting advertising is another method to manage land use and ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the Industrial Environment, and a safe and efficient roading network.



An example of signage typical of retail activities in industrial areas

Landscaping

Landscaping, along with building setbacks is often used as a means of visual mitigation to soften the impact of industrial buildings and activity such as storage yards. Landscaping is often provided along main roading corridors, or between industrial zones and residential zones. Examples can be seen along Crown Road and between Matai Street industrial properties and Elizabeth Street residential properties.

To date the industrial areas of Miro Street and Rakaunui Road have operated as fairly discreet areas, and exposure to industrial activity has generally been the result of a decision to visit these locations rather than forced upon passing motorists. However, by providing future industrial land along the edge of the ETA, there will be a new road/industrial activity interface issue, that does not exist at present.

Landscaping along the edge of main roads can be very effective at reducing the visual impact of industrial activity. It is not clear at this stage what form the landscaping should take, and this will likely require more investigation of the land available and best treatment of this land. It is not necessary to hide all development. Clusters of planting to break views of the back of industrial properties can be more effective than trying to create continuous screening. Like the control of signs, the landscaping provisions will require development through the District Plan process.



An example of landscaping utilising clusters of trees to break the impact of large buildings



An example of landscaping treatments along the front boundary

Spa Road

As part of considering future demand for commercial space to meet the needs of the town, other locations were looked at to determine their function and purpose, and success in achieving commercial support. There are eight groups of neighbourhood shops, and several individual shops, located throughout the greater urban area. These shops provide an important function in serving the day to day needs of the surrounding neighbourhood. They vary in size and range of venues, depending on their commercial catchment and market demand for goods and services.

There are also various locations zoned Residential (High Density) which allows more intensive development of a site that suits fringe commercial activity such as motels and offices, but still requires a residential scale of effects. The land between Titirapunga Street and Kaimanawa Street, being the first block of land east of the town centre, is one such location zoned Residential (High Density).

Properties along Spa Road are all currently part of the Residential Environment. There has always been some non-residential activity in this location such as schools, shops, garden centre, office activity, etc, and it has been decided to rezone properties fronting the south side of Spa Road to Residential (High Density). This rezoning recognises the potential of this location to provide for fringe commercial activity along an arterial route close to the town centre.

The proposed change to the District Plan will determine the exact properties concerned, and any necessary provisions required to protect adjoining properties, and reflect the surrounding environment and roading system. That plan change will be subject to further consultation with the affected property owners, interested parties and the community.



The red shaded area represents those properties currently in the Residential Environment that are proposed to be rezoned as Residential Environment (High Density)

Gateways and wayfinding

An immediate change resulting from the opening of the East Taupō Arterial road (ETA) will be the provision of different options for travelling to Taupō. By presenting a series of alternative routes for moving into or through town, the ETA will place emphasis on a number of gateways into the town.

Over time, the gateways and road corridors leading into town can be designed to develop distinctive approaches into the town centre. While fixed gateways in the traditional sense should be part of the design response, the focus should be placed more holistically on the full arrival experience. The diagram below identifies fixed entry points and key intersections, but also highlights the movement corridors that will be instrumental in creating arrival sequences.

An arrival sequence considers the full and changing experience of arrival, gradually moving through a space rather than simply entering through a fixed point. For example, the northern approach to the town centre provides a series of experiences, from semi-enclosed, heavily planted sections of road through to other sections offering expansive views of the lake. Design should consider the full range of arrival experiences.



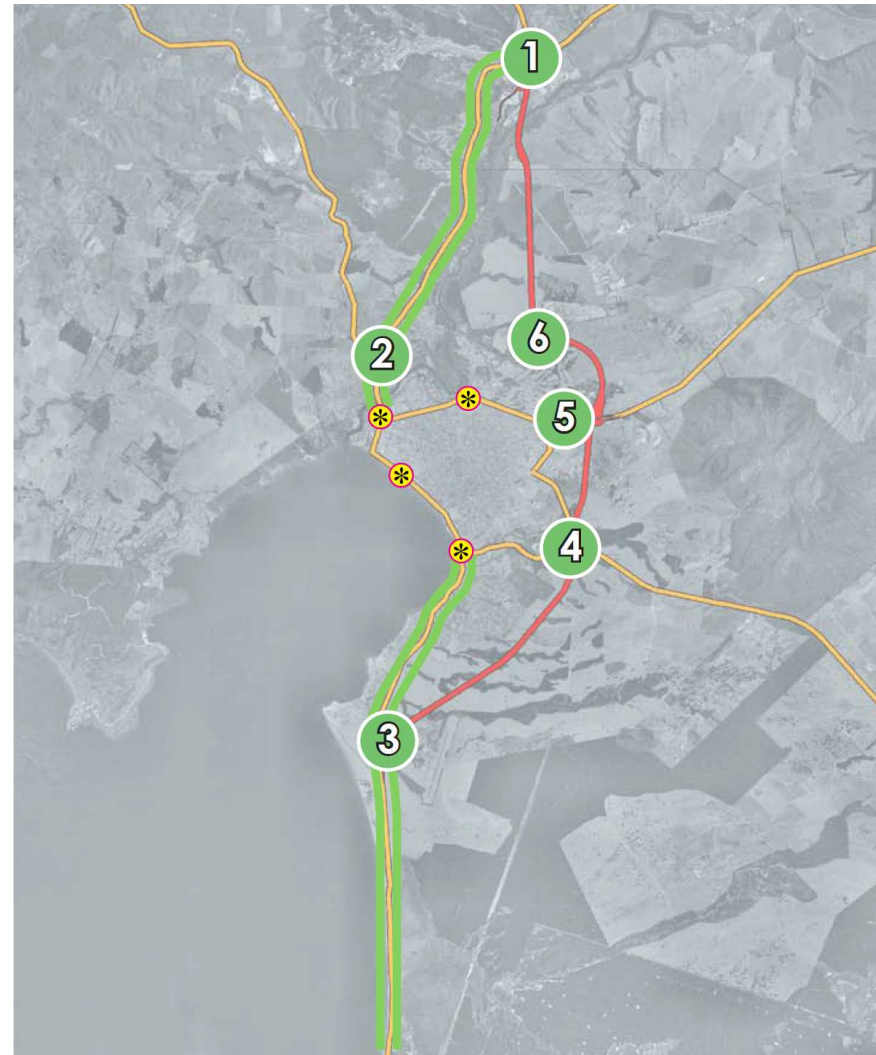
Entry points: those that serve as the first point of arrival into Taupō's urban area (1-6)



Key intersections: those that are marked by the convergence of arterial roads and at the interface between urban and natural areas such as Roberts Street and the Lake. To be a future focus of road upgrades with high amenity planting.



East Taupō Arterial route



Gateways to Taupō town showing the entry points from the East Taupō Arterial and key intersections at the gateways to the town centre

Gateway one (Wairakei)

Northern Approach - Intersection of State Highway 5 (SH5) to Rotorua and State Highway 1 (SH1) to Hamilton.

Function

A decision point that directs travellers either into Taupō town centre along the existing SH1 route or to bypass town via the East Taupō Arterial (ETA). A key first point of arrival.

Opportunities

- Proposed roundabout will act as a decision point, separating through-travellers from those planning to stop in Taupō.
- Potential to 'capture' travellers who might be enticed into town for a rest or service stopover. Signage directing travellers along SH1 towards Taupō's shops, cafés, parks, lakefront and services should be combined with high amenity landscaping to attract people into town.
- Create and market existing SH1 route as a tourist / scenic route with emphasis on tourist experiences, and high amenity.
- Enhance and increase the presence of Wairakei Tourist Park activity.

Key Elements

- Geothermal energy and rising steam;
- Large specimen trees planted in clusters;
- Dominant rural character with some tourist activity, built form gradually increasing approaching town.



Craters of the moon

Gateway two (Control Gates Hill)

Northern Entry into Town - between Huka Falls Rd lookout and Waikato River crossing.

Function

This stretch of road is memorable for drivers because of the experience of coming into visual contact with Lake Taupō, the mountains and Waikato River. Panoramic views open out towards the Lake and can be seen from the lookout. The highway then descends past residential fences down to the bridge crossing.

Opportunities

- It is anticipated that the majority of travellers headed for the town centre area from the north will continue to arrive via this route. As such, the route creates the all-important first-impression and sets the scene for the rest of the town. The stretch of road between gateways 1 and 2 needs to be treated as an arrival sequence that tells a story about Taupō.
- Currently the route from the lookout to the town centre has low amenity values offering up boarded back fences, a wide grassed verge and exposed cut faces. The view to the Lake is the defining element and this could be framed by appropriate street trees or sculptural elements that are designed to emphasise the experience of movement down and into town.

- There is potential to enhance the bridge crossing with a more defined gateway feature. The pedestrian link between the lookout and town could also be improved and the lookout enhanced and promoted as a pedestrian destination as well as a vehicle stopover.
- Points where traffic slows down (approach to bridge, roundabout) could be ideal locations for sculptural elements.

Elements

- Panoramic view to Lake Taupō.
- Screen planting to reduce visual dominance of residential areas.
- Themed planting creating strong connection with town centre. For example deciduous trees with strong autumnal colour leading the eye down and culminating at the Great Lake Centre.
- Generally smaller trees (6 to 10m) planted in more linear / formal arrangements as one nears town centre. A sense of transition from the rural fringe to the urban area should be achieved.
- Themed signage or banners along the approach to town promoting key attractions and events.
- Bridge enhanced to create memorable entry experience.



Looking southward from the lookout at the top of Control Gates Hill

Gateway three (Airport)

Southern Approach - Around the intersections of SH1 with Anzac Memorial Drive, Ernest Kemp Rise and ETA.

Function

New roundabout directs travellers either into Taupō town centre along the existing SH1 route or to bypass town via the ETA.

Opportunities

- Clear views of the town centre begin to open up from as far south as Waitahanui. There is potential to begin themed roadside plantings at these points, beginning with sparse clusters and building to a crescendo at Ernest Kemp Rise where more formal plantings could then lead into the urban area.
- This airport intersection will serve as another filter, offering a choice between the bypass and the town. There is a clear opportunity to direct people towards the lakefront and town centre, introducing cues to entice travellers towards the lakefront, cafés, retail and civic heart.
- South of the airport, the connection with the Tongariro Plateau and natural character values could be used as a basis for roadside planting schemes, drawing on native species and more naturalised approaches as a point of difference to the northern entrance.

- A shift to exotic trees around the Anzac Memorial Drive roundabout to announce arrival.
- Roundabout feature incorporating low feature planting and sculptural elements.

Elements

- Scattered boulders, views to lake and town over Ernest Kemp Rise.
- Clusters of native trees and shrubs along road corridor.
- Dominant pastoral character, open space and views to Lake Taupō and Mount Tauhara.
- Entry signage and defined gateway point at the Anzac Memorial Drive roundabout, welcoming people to Taupō. Signage should give a clear directional emphasis towards the town centre.
- Attention should be given to the boundary treatment of new residential areas. Solid, boarded fences should be avoided or hidden behind planting.



Approaching Taupō from the south with the airport on the right

Gateway four (State Highway 5)

Eastern Approach - Future intersection of ETA and State Highway 5 (Napier Road)

Function

Arrival point from the Hawkes Bay with new roundabout at intersection.

Opportunities

- Maintaining clear view shafts to Lake Taupō, town centre and rural backdrop.
- Roundabout designed as low-key feature.

Key Elements

- Clusters of specimen trees to form plantation planting, matching existing landscape character.
- Native revegetation in gullies.
- Development buffered from the road corridor.
- Entry signage, low feature planting and sculptural elements.



View towards Taupō arriving on State Highway 5

Gateway five (Broadlands Road)

Intersection of ETA and Broadlands Road

Function

Secondary entry point and transition between new industrial and urban / residential fringe.

Opportunities

- Potential to create special design feature of bridge abutments near off-ramp to announce turn off to town centre.
- Create an ecological or green corridor between the geothermal reserves.
- Native plantings on fill batters around off-ramp.
- Town centre signage at intersection between off-ramp and Broadlands Road.

Key Elements

- Native geothermal planting.
- Native revegetation in gullies and through geothermal reserves.
- Design of retaining walls and walls to reference geothermal character.



Geothermal activity near the Broadlands Road gateway

Gateway six (Centennial Drive)

Intersection of ETA and Centennial Drive

Function

Secondary entry point and transition between new industrial and urban / residential fringe. Entries to new industrial areas, motorsport park, Owen Delany Park, golf course and to AC Baths/Events Centre.

Opportunities

- Town centre signage at intersection between off-ramp and Centennial Road.
- Potential to create special design feature of grade separation bridge and incorporate signage / town centre marketing material.
- Specimen trees grouped to reinforce character of nearby golf course plantings.
- Use of materials, feature walls to reference nearby industrial activity.

Key Elements

Clusters of specimen trees to reinforce golf course character.



Heavy industrial area on Centennial Drive



New Zealand Rugby Tag national championship held at Owen Delany Park

Wayfinding

Along with the treatment of gateways from the East Taupō Arterial, there will also be the implementation of a wayfinding strategy within the town centre.

Wayfinding is a term used to cover a wide range of responses to try and make it easier for people to find their way through the urban environment. Traditionally, signs have been relied upon as the primary source of helping people find their way, however a more holistic approach uses other elements to help like landscaping, street design and building design.

In the Taupō context, implementing this wayfinding is critical given the town's reliance on the visitor industry. It can provide visitors with information on destinations, their location and how long it might take to get there. There are also opportunities to make the wayfinding experience a uniquely Taupō one, incorporating local culture, art and history.

Wayfinding will help contribute to a sense of place, making people feel more secure and confident in their enjoyment of the town centre.



Some examples of wayfinding signs showing different approaches to providing information to pedestrians

Traffic management

State Highway One passing through the town centre has historically dictated the approach to traffic management. Its role as a major through route has meant that there have been large volumes of interregional traffic passing through the heart of the town centre. Similarly Tongariro, Heuheu and Tamamutu Streets are regularly used by locals as key routes when passing from one side of town to the other.

The management of traffic flows through the town centre will change with the opening of the East Taupō Arterial. Some of that interregional traffic will choose to use the East Taupō Arterial, and those visitors coming into the town centre will be stopping rather than simply passing through.

As a result, the streets of the town centre, particularly those in the pedestrian precinct, can become more pedestrian orientated. Although cars will not be excluded they will be expected to move more slowly, and drivers will need to share the road with pedestrians and cyclists.

Reprioritisation of Titiraupenga Street

Local traffic moving across the town will need to be provided with alternatives to Tongariro Street and driving through the heart of the town centre. The grid system of streets does provide a range of options and is effective at distributing vehicles to avoid excessive congestion. In addition, changes to Titiraupenga Street are planned, to allow traffic moving north and south to have priority.

This reprioritisation will allow Titiraupenga Street to act as a primary distributor road, taking local traffic around the heart of the town centre. Local traffic could then make use of the east/west roads like Heuheu and Tamamutu Streets or Lake Terrace to move across town. Alternatively, they could use Titiraupenga Street to feed into the off street car parking precincts to the west of Titiraupenga Street.

This distributor role for Titiraupenga Street was previously identified in the Taupō Urban Structure Plan (2004). Importantly, it maintains the flexibility to connect to Spa Road to accommodate future second river crossing options.

The timing of changes to Titiraupenga Street is likely to be linked to improvements on Tongariro Street.



Oblique aerial photograph taken in 1951 looking south with Ruapehu St on the left and Tongariro St on the right

Visitor traffic

While local traffic will use the flexibility of the street grid pattern to find the quickest route to their destination, visitor traffic will be purposefully directed along Lake Terrace and Tongariro Street. This route will bring them into the heart of the town where the visitor facilities are located and short term car parking is provided.

To achieve this, the intersection of Titiraupenga Street and Lake Terrace in the south and the Spa Road roundabout in the north will need to be treated as gateways. This will involve appropriate signs and streetscape design.



Superloo on Tongariro Street



Proposed roading network through the town centre

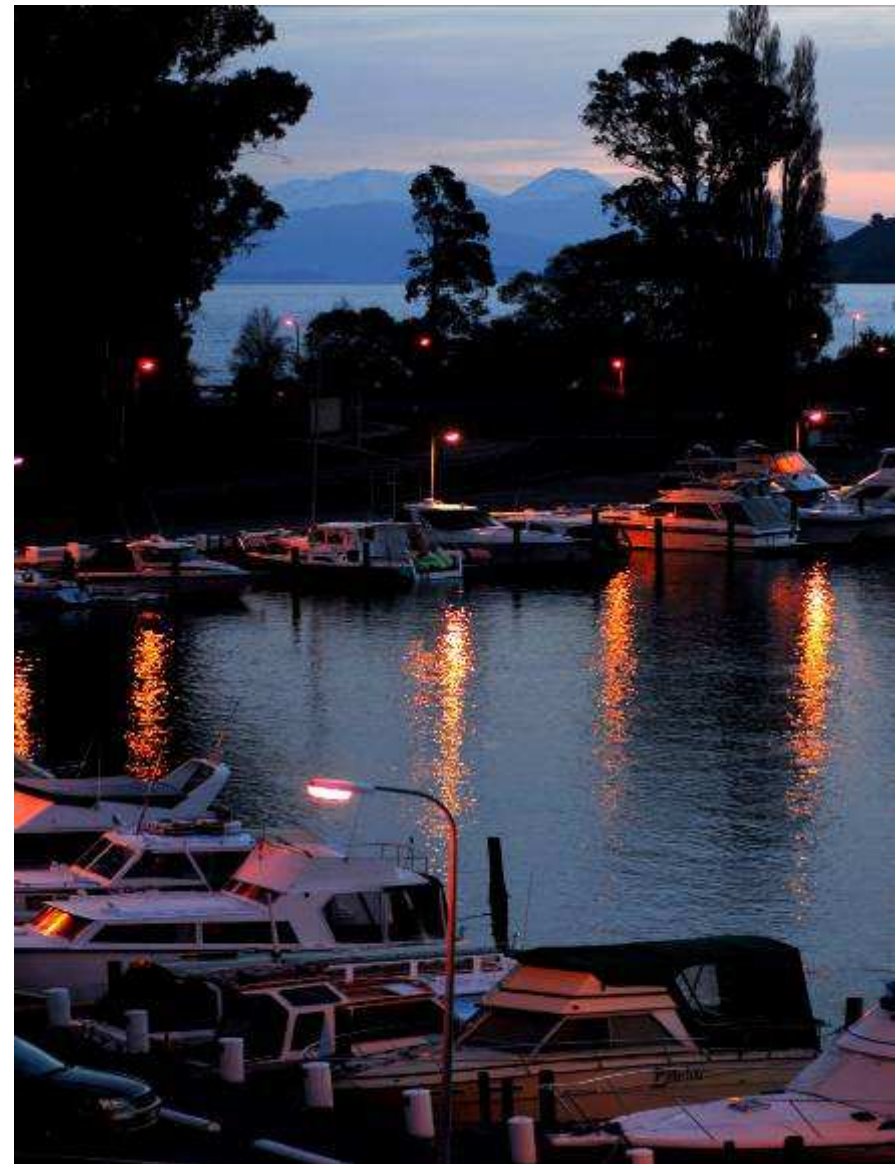
Roading and the Tongariro Domain

The roading that goes around and through the Tongariro Domain is very much a part of the town centre. It provides important access to civic and recreational activities on the Tongariro Domain and critical links to the Taupō Boat Harbour. There is significant opportunity to improve the design of these roads as well as their connections.

Story Place and the roading behind the Great Lake Centre lacks legibility, particularly for visitors to the area. The curving nature of the roads, the off street surface car parking and the multiple gardens all contribute to make the area difficult to navigate. To try and address these issues it is proposed to straighten the roading through this area as much as possible, and convert the off street car parking into kerbside parking.

It is also intended to extend Story Place down to the Taupō Boat Harbour. In the short term, the focus will be on improving the pedestrian linkage and creating some sort of entrance feature to provide a visual link from the Domain to the Boat Harbour. In the longer term, the road will be extended down to allow for vehicle access.

The timing of the Story Place extension will be partly dictated by the ownership of the Landing Reserve on the eastern shore of the Taupō Boat Harbour. At present, the land is owned and managed by the Crown, however it may return to Ngati Tuwharetoa ownership in the future. If this happens, the Council may be in a better position to discuss how improved access might integrate with the land owners' aspirations.



Taupō Boat Harbour

The northern link to the Taupō Boat Harbour is currently via Redoubt Street. This street currently also provides access to the, Taupō Tennis Club, Active Arts facilities, Saturday Market, Riverside Park and through to the back of the Great Lake Centre. Importantly, this street is used by the police for quick access to the north. It is proposed to keep this Redoubt Street link but to realign its northern section so that it links to the Spa Road roundabout. The geometry of the realignment will allow the tennis courts to remain in their present location.

This realignment will reduce some of the safety and congestion issues associated with the current intersection on State Highway one. It will also help to create a much larger open space around the top of the amphitheatre helping to address some of the space issues associated with corporate facilities during major events.

Although still providing access for vehicles and cyclists, this realigned portion of Redoubt Street will be downgraded so that it is narrower and flush with the grass either side. Its treatment and design will facilitate pedestrian access, and help to break down the barrier between the Tongariro North Domain and Riverside Park.



Redoubt Street, looking north from the Taupō Boat Harbour

Along the southern boundary of the Tongariro Domain runs Ferry Road. It provides an important link from Tongariro Street down to the Taupō Boat Harbour, along with other facilities like the bowling club. The present configuration of the road has resulted in excessive amounts of seal and a barrier between the South Domain and the lakefront.

As part of the street upgrades throughout the town centre it is anticipated that Ferry Road will be improved. There are opportunities to reduce the width of the carriageway and reorganise the parking in a more efficient manner within the street itself. This in turn will enable more green space to be added to the lakefront esplanade. Of critical importance will be the treatment of the road where it borders the garden areas of the South Domain at the eastern end of the road. Design of this part of the road should aim to reduce the dominance of the road and associated parking in favour of much stronger linkages across to the lakefront reserve.



Ferry Road looking toward the Taupō Boat Harbour

Streets as shared spaces

Most of the streets of the town centre have been designed with the needs of the drivers and their motor cars put first. The focus has been on reduced travelling times and making it easier for people to drive. This in turn, has meant that the streets have been less inviting for those who want to walk or cycle, push prams or sit at a café and watch the town go by.

In Taupō, a number of the streets act as through routes cutting through the town centre. The most obvious is State Highway One which severs the town centre from the Lake and Domain. However, Tamamutu Street and Heuheu Street are also collector roads which not only bring people into the town centre but also through it. This pattern of through traffic brings vehicles through the town centre, even when they have no interest in stopping. This contributes to vehicle congestion and reduces the enjoyment of the street environment for other users.

In the future, the streets of town will lead people to the town centre rather than through it. With this significant change in function, the nature of the town centre streets will also change. The intent is to make the streets in the pedestrian precinct area public spaces that are shared by all of the users. It is through the creation of more human spaces that community interaction can be fostered and the social and economic value of streets can be realised.

The nature of change to each street will need to reflect their different functions. Streets like Tuwharetoa and Horomatangi are predominantly parking precincts, where as Tamamutu and Heuheu Streets carry more traffic into the town centre and those circulating, looking for a car park.



Heuheu Street, showing the nature of streets designed primarily for vehicles rather than the full range of users

'Shared space' is an approach to street design that tries to find a better balance between the movement function and the place making attributes of streets. Streets designed in this way tend to have fewer road signs and markings. Pedestrians, including the mobility impaired, have more space and freedom to walk along and across the street, making drivers more hesitant and therefore slower. The uncertainty about who has right of way, caused by such design, is critical in making all users of the road more conscious and considerate.

There are many examples of how this concept of shared space has been applied in large and small communities. One increasingly common approach is to turn the street into a shared surface, where there is no physical distinction like a kerb or change in level. This creates a communal space that is shared by all users. In such situations it is the design of the street, rather than signs or road markings, which makes it clear to all users that they are welcome to use the space. The presumption that the car has right of way over pedestrians is effectively removed through design.

This approach to the design of the town centre streets is considered appropriate given the low traffic speeds anticipated. Those driving into the town centre will be doing so to find a car park so that they can then walk to their different destinations. Instead of carrying through traffic the streets of the town centre will become car parking precincts and important public spaces for community interaction. They will help to improve the image of the town centre and create a place where people want to visit and stay.

Changes to the design of streets in the town centre are likely to result in some reorganisation of car parking. This may involve the loss of some parking on one street and the creation of additional parking on another. The balance of short term, long term car parking and ongoing demand will continue to be monitored to ensure that the needs of users are met.



Swanston Street, Melbourne showing the benefits of a quality pedestrian space with a wide footpath and street trees

Placing the design emphasis for streets on people rather than cars has been shown to create many benefits. For instance:

- Lower vehicle speeds creating a safer more enjoyable environment for pedestrians and cyclists
- Reduced vehicle congestion as people make more use of cycling and walking
- Social interaction as people use better public spaces
- Enhanced flexibility of the street as a public open space enables greater use for a diverse range of activities
- A safer place where all users respect the rights of others
- Improved health benefits from more walking and cycling
- Increased footfall outside shops and cafes and a tendency for people to spend more time in the town centre
- Higher retail rents and confidence from private investors
- A more environmentally sustainable town centre through increased reliance on walking, cycling and public transport



62% increase in pedestrian traffic
93% reduction in motorised traffic
600% more staying activity
22% increase in cycling activity



New Road, Brighton before (above) and after (right) showing a low volume traffic street turned into a shared space (source www.cabe.org.uk).

A long term programme of change

Although there are some short term projects that can improve the town centre streets, undertaking a full upgrade can be a costly exercise. This means that changes through the town centre will need to be staged over the next twenty years or more as resources and money become available. A key to maintaining a programme of improvements will be community and political will.

One of the risks with a long term project is that different parts are done in a piecemeal manner without due consideration given to how they interact.

To ensure that the ongoing programme of street improvements achieves a consistency of design and integration, the following elements will need to be assessed as part of each street upgrade plan:

- Functions of the street and those connecting to it
- Key paths, connections and nodes for the different types of users
- The main design elements that will be consistent throughout the town centre

This ongoing programme of improvements will include the streets which go around and through the Tongariro Domain. They are as much a part of the town centre as other streets, providing important connections to civic facilities and the Taupō Boat Harbour.

An inclusive design process will be used during the development of the street upgrade plans. Streets are utilised by a wide range of different groups and it is important that each of their needs are recognised and respected. In the context of creating shared space it will be important to involve those who represent the mobility impaired. Taupō is also unique in that the town centre is the hub for many major events. It will be critical to make sure that planned improvements to the streets take into consideration the needs of these events.

There will also need to be changes to the way that streets are managed. Council policies govern the locations of tables and chairs, free standing signs and the position of goods that are sold on the footpath outside shops. Managing these elements is a small but critical part of ensuring that streets operate well for all users. The relevant Council policies and bylaws will be reviewed as required. Any such review should emphasise the needs of pedestrians over those of commercial operators, for example the placement of tables and chairs should not prevent people in wheelchairs or pushing prams from using the footpath.



Tongariro Street, closed during a major event

Tongariro Street

All streets in the town centre have the potential to contribute to the vitality of public life and economic wellbeing; however Tongariro Street is a key corridor where changes will make a major impact.

As State Highway One, Tongariro Street cuts through the town centre. It effectively separates the commercial areas from the open recreational space of the Tongariro Domain and the civic facilities like the Library and Great Lake Centre. The segregation effect caused by the roading corridor is exacerbated by its extreme width with four lanes for traffic and car parking on both sides. It can be an uninviting corridor for pedestrians to cross, particularly for the elderly and those with children.

Following the opening of the East Taupō Arterial Tongariro Street will revert to being a local street. This provides a real opportunity to relook at how Tongariro Street fits within the town centre, and how its design can contribute to better connections.

Critical elements of the design

Like all street upgrades in town, a detailed concept design will need to be developed for Tongariro Street. Tongariro Street will cease to operate as State Highway 1 and will become another local street under the control of the Council. With this change in management will also come a change in function.

It will continue to be the route visitors to town are directed to use, however they tend to be driving slower, seeking facilities like the I-site, Superloo and cafes. They will also require ample car parking options along the street to make the most of these visitor facilities.



Tongariro Street, looking south toward the lake

Reduced through traffic and slower moving visitor traffic, will open up the opportunity to reduce the number of lanes. At present there are four dedicated lanes, however this can be reduced to a single lane in each direction. Maintaining traffic flow in both directions is very important for the ongoing function of the street, although the traffic speeds can be reduced.

The creation of new car parking areas will be possible within the road reserve once the traffic lanes are reduced from four to two. This is particularly important for visitors to the town centre seeking to access facilities like the I-site.

A big driver for change along Tongariro Street is the creation of an environment that will encourage more pedestrian activity. Substantially increasing the width of the footpaths and the planting of large specimen trees will combine with the slower vehicle speeds to create a safer and more attractive pedestrian environment.

The detailed concept plan will also need to show how pedestrian movement across Tongariro Street can be improved. Strengthening connections with the facilities within the civic heart and the recreational areas of the wider Tongariro Domain is one of the key objectives of this Structure Plan.

The moves toward a slower vehicle speed environment along Tongariro Street will assist with addressing safety concerns for cyclists. With slower vehicle speeds it will become much easier for cyclists to mix with cars and pedestrians within the street corridor. It will also be important for the design to reflect the need for other facilities like secure covered bike storage.



Tongariro Street, closed during the Lake Taupō Cycle Challenge



A street market, Aix en Provence showing multiple uses for streets



A street scene from Queenstown showing nightlife spilling out onto the street

Design process and timing

The philosophy of shared space will be applied to the detailed design of Tongariro Street. This will need to reflect the role of the street as a parking precinct, primary visitor route and connection between commercial and recreational areas. Like all town centre street upgrades, this will require an inclusive design process establishing and respecting the needs of all the different users.

Of particular relevance for Tongariro Street are the needs of events such as the Lake Taupō Cycle Challenge and the Ironman, both of which involve cycling down Tongariro Street. Changes to the street like the surface material, the positioning of trees and the treatment of intersections could impact on their ability to continue to use Tongariro Street. Understanding and reflecting these needs will be a key part of the design process.

Changes to Tongariro Street could be undertaken in stages. This would assist in financing the project. It would also allow critical sections of the street to be addressed first. This is most likely to relate to the connections from the commercial area on the eastern side of the street across to the Tongariro South Domain and the Civic Heart.

No physical works could be undertaken until the street is formally transferred back to Council control. This will take place approximately 18 months after the East Taupō Arterial is opened. The detailed design and construction will be linked to the availability of funding.

The other consideration, from a timing perspective, is the impact that changes to Tongariro Street may have on traffic flows. There is likely to be some displacement of traffic onto other town centre streets, making it likely that substantial changes to Tongariro Street will be aligned with the reprioritisation of Titiraupenga Street.



Looking down Tongariro Street from the north showing the way the street acts as a barrier between the commercial area and the civic heart and recreational areas

Laneways and service lanes

At present the north-south laneway link from Suncourt down to Tuwharetoa Street is a pedestrian only connection. In contrast, the service lanes at the back of the town centre premises are predominantly for vehicles. Both areas offer significant opportunities for improvements which in turn can contribute toward making the town centre a lively, more interesting urban environment.

Laneways offer an alternative type of shopping and hospitality, an area where tenancies tend to be more boutique compared to main street shops. There is a more intimate feel to the laneways with their pedestrian only nature and the more enclosed sense of space. Further development of such tenancies would provide enhanced opportunities for smaller scale and start up businesses to have a town centre presence.

The service lanes will remain integral to delivery services in the town centre. Whilst ensuring delivery vehicle access is maintained, the service lanes will progressively become more attractive and safer for pedestrian access.

The removal of onsite car parking requirements for the pedestrian precinct area will open up opportunities for land owners. Traditionally these rear areas have been dominated by service functions and car parking, however this relaxation of District Plan provisions will enable further commercial development fronting the service lanes. Like the laneway network this will facilitate smaller business growth and the creation of interesting spaces like restaurants.

Redevelopment of the laneways and service lanes will be incremental over the coming 20 years. Council's role will be to coordinate the aspirations of nearby land owners and to provide improvements to the public realm in the way of surface improvements, street furniture, lighting and landscaping.



An example of a lane in Melbourne







Service lane between Tamamutu & Horomatangi Streets

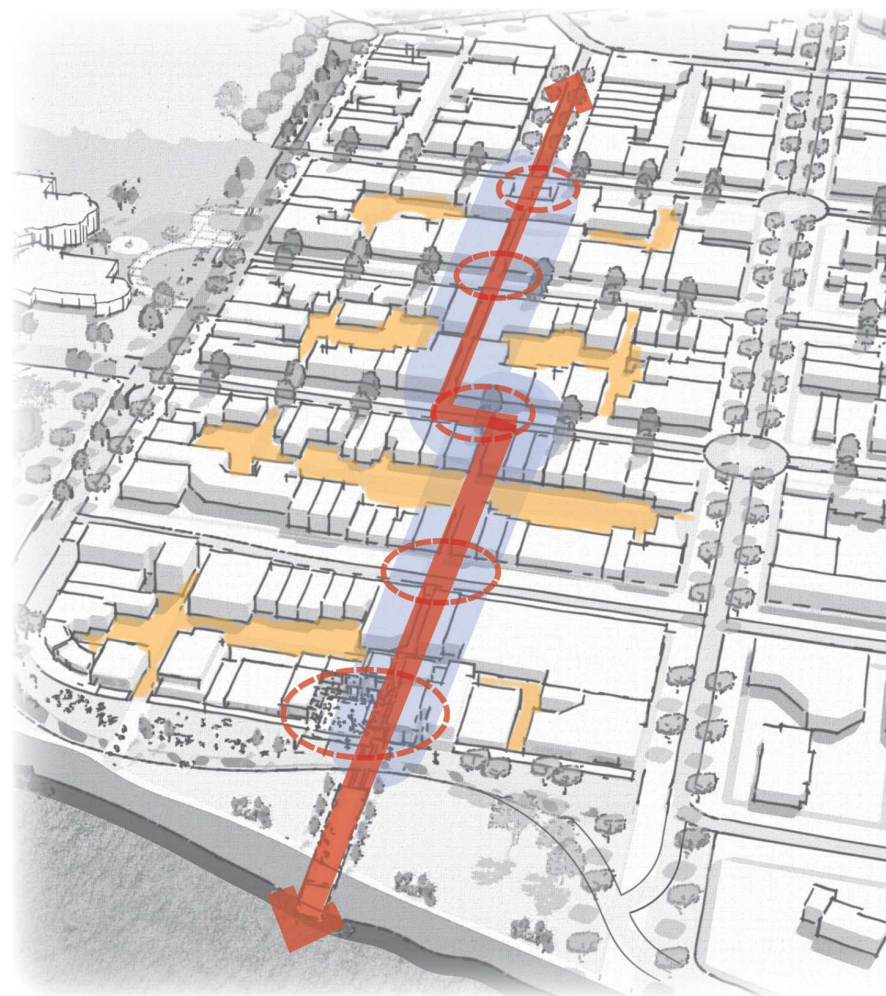


Marama Arcade showing a mix of fine grain retail







Laneway & Service Lane Objectives

- Maintain vehicle access to service lanes for delivery
- Provide attractive safe pedestrian links within the retail and entertainment precincts
- Improve comfort for pedestrians using the laneway network with infrastructure such as lighting and roof cover
- Provide exciting alternative shopping and hospitality options
- Connect the retail and entertainment precincts with Lake Taupō
- Increase desirable public space within the town centre, providing opportunities for social interaction
- Encourage landowners to redevelop
- Provide opportunities for pocket parks within the town centre, particularly where laneways and streets cross
- Safer pedestrian crossing facilities where a laneway meets a main street, with design placing the emphasis on pedestrian needs
- Facilitates consolidation of commercial activities within a compact and walkable town centre

	Primary pedestrian axis made up of connected network of laneways and pedestrian priority spaces
	Pedestrian nodal points, designed to act as gathering and meeting points.
	Intensified retail activity with emphasis on smaller boutique tenancies.
	Service lanes provide opportunity for future mixed-use development.



*The primary north-south laneway network
(see page 52 for further detail on the proposed lakefront plaza)*

-  Active street edges with potential for strong pedestrian amenity
-  Open space
-  Flat land associated with events focused recreational reserve
-  Primary pedestrian corridors to be enhanced
-  Secondary pedestrian linkages to be enhanced
-  Pedestrian activity nodes developed as urban squares / plazas
-  Pedestrian focused gathering areas with prioritised crossings



Key pedestrian routes and public places in the town centre

Roberts Street and the plaza

The Roberts Street area provides an important opportunity to better connect the town centre with the Lake. It is already the front door to the town centre, offering the first point of contact for people arriving from the south, and consists of important elements such as increased paved areas in front of entertainment venues, and the Colonel Roberts Reserve.

The Structure Plan proposes to remove the existing highway which presently extends along the top of the lake edge escarpment. The southern end of Tongariro Street will become a realigned shared street forming the edge to an enlarged pedestrian area along the front of existing properties. The realigned street will sweep around the pedestrian area and connect with the existing Lake Terrace alignment at the Ruapehu Street corner.

The curved nature of the realigned street shown on the maps in this Structure Plan is indicative of one potential route. The exact alignment will be established through detailed design plans, and in consultation with property owners and the events industry.

The intent of the proposed changes is to create a quality pedestrian environment that can be accessed from both ends, as well as through the laneway system. The reserve then extends uninterrupted to the top of the lake escarpment, providing an improved connection for people to view the Lake and mountains.

An important component will be a new plaza, or public space, connecting the laneways with Roberts Street. The plaza will provide a frontage opportunity for smaller speciality shops, but also offer a sheltered area to retreat to during inclement weather. Until such time as the plaza can be created, it is proposed to encourage use of the existing service lanes to connect people with Tuwharetoa Street.

It is intended that more detailed plans for the development of this location will be prepared as a matter of priority, with the redevelopment work recognised as a critical project. Like Tongariro Street, improvements to this area will need to wait until State Highway 1 comes back under the control of Council.



Artists impression of one potential design for the plaza on Roberts Street with a public space linking back to Tuwharetoa Street via a lane on the right hand side



View from the public car park on Tuwharetoa Street looking south toward the Lake with Pizza Hut on the left and KFC on the right

Civic Heart

What is a civic heart?

A civic square is a formal urban space with distinct edges defined by public buildings, often with one open edge overlooking the town. They are focal points in the public space network and provide the forum for exchange, both social and economic, and focus on civic pride and community expression.

Civic heart is a concept created for the purposes of this Structure Plan, and builds on sound urban design principles for establishing quality civic centres. The civic heart concept seeks to ensure that the location of a civic centre, and the range of civic buildings surrounding it, is such that it is seen by the community as the heart of town.

A successful Civic Heart, as the name suggests, should be a recognised and accepted central component of the town centre, generating activity both in itself, and contributing to the vibrancy and excitement of the wider town centre environment.

The benefits of creating a civic heart

A well designed civic heart can breathe life into a town centre by providing a range of public buildings and activity that engages people and encourages them to visit this part of town. It provides people with the incentive to extend their stay in the town centre, because it provides public spaces and buildings of interest, and generates complementary town centre activity.

Historically, the planning and design of towns has been based around a public square or common, which was a space surrounded by public, community and cultural institutions. They sometimes contained a market place, seats of government, or a Cathedral, and they provided a focal point for urban life. By clustering around a town square, these civic buildings created a physical and symbolic centre, engaging the community in public life, and encouraging involvement in democracy.

However, during the more recent automobile-age, many new towns developed without defined civic centres, because cultural, community and civic facilities were no longer grouped together. These towns developed along a main street, with scattered community facilities that required people to travel by car from one destination to another. The resulting costs and inefficiencies of getting around these towns, is no longer acceptable under today's planning objectives of promoting sustainable urban development.

Contemporary approaches to town planning and urban design principles recognise that a well designed civic heart can have social, cultural and economic benefits. While in today's information age, a library is a more likely focal point than a cathedral, the established principle of organising a range of civic, community and cultural facilities around a central public space is still a powerful concept.

Through this Structure Plan, the creation of places for people will become a guiding objective for the Taupō town centre. The benefits of core public spaces such as a civic heart are numerous, enhancing a town's image and providing a focus for public life and tourism which in turn encourages economic investment and revitalisation opportunities.

A well designed Civic Heart containing all the main civic institutions in town provides operational efficiencies and a critical mass of activity that assists people to access the facilities in greater numbers. With increased visitor numbers to the Civic Heart, comes the opportunity for increased visitors to the town centre, and potential for an extended social and economic interaction. It creates an anchor for the town centre, a focus of culture and identity, and provides the 'front-door' and first impression for visitors and tourists.

Desirable activities within a civic heart

Civic Heart locations vary from town to town, in the activities that they offer. However, a review of towns nationally and internationally shows that there are a number of recurring elements.

Public Spaces

- Markets and Events are important activities that activate civic spaces.
- Public art and points of interest such as statues, fountains and water features are common and serve as meeting points.
- Passive areas where people can sit comfortably, watch and talk with other people and read a book.
- Information and good signage for visitors guiding them around town.

Public and Civic Institutions

The types of buildings found depends on the core values of the community; sometimes democratic or government institutions are prominent but in other cases cultural facilities are the focus.

- Libraries are in many cases becoming the cornerstone of a civic centre where knowledge and learning are key values.
- Town Halls and Government buildings are traditionally a centrepiece where democracy and public involvement in political processes is highly valued.
- Museums and Art Galleries are common in civic centres, expressing a community's history and collective identity.
- Community Services such as court houses, fire and police stations, community groups and organisations are often found but are generally not a focus.
- Supporting retail is increasingly common at the street level including cafés, galleries and tourist shops.
- Transit stops are centrally located and easily accessible.



Market, Melbourne



Wellington's Civic Square



The Octagon, Dunedin



Taupō context - Civic Heart location

The Structure Plan promotes the location around the Great Lake Centre and Library, as the place for a Civic Heart. This location is ideally positioned for maximum influence within the wider town centre environs. Its close proximity to the commercial area provides a sense of place within the town centre, and will allow people to walk and mix freely between civic and commercial activity. Eventual upgrades to Tongariro Street will assist with connectivity to the commercial area.

The Cenotaph area provides sufficient space for a civic square, and there is already a range of existing civic buildings in this location, as well as a number of complementary facilities. These existing facilities provide a strong base on which to expand the range of venues and create a critical mass of activity that will truly activate the civic square, as well as the surrounding Domain and adjacent commercial area.

The right mix of uses

A successful Civic Heart should have a range of public facilities that not only function as community places in their own right, but also allow for management partnerships with each other. Extending the range of existing facilities provides the opportunity for increased numbers of people to visit this location, and stay longer because there will be more places of interest. People staying longer in this location increases the potential for people to stay longer in the wider town centre environment.

It is proposed to extend the range of existing civic facilities to create a larger mix of activities, which will provide a focal point for the town centre and a place for the community to meet and celebrate. Increased activity around the Cenotaph will also improve this space as a fully functioning town square once extended civic facilities activate the space.

Timing and staging

The proposal to develop a Civic Heart, as with many of the Structure Plan initiatives, is a long term planning vision for the town centre. Extending existing buildings, establishing new activity, and rearranging roading and open space, will take time and further detailed planning. Timing and staging development will be balanced against town growth and demand, affordability, and the resulting social and economic gains.

Tongariro Domain

The Domain is predominantly Crown land vested in the Taupō District Council as reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. Taupō District Council manages and develops the reserve in accordance with its primary purpose of recreation.

The Domain is broadly divided into a number of areas each of which has a different focus in terms of use. The South Domain area between Ferry Road and Story Place is primarily used for passive recreation with some community and civic buildings like the Bowling Club and Museum. The Tongariro North Domain area stretches to the north of the Great Lake Centre encompassing the large grassed open space which is generally used for events, many of which are commercial in nature. Further to the north and west on the other side of Redoubt Street is Riverside Park which is used for passive recreation, Saturday markets and the amphitheatre which is events focused.

Between the South and the North Domain areas is land managed by the Government where the police station and courthouse are located. There is also an area of local purpose reserve managed by the Council, which includes the Library, Information site and Great Lake Centre with associated car parking.



Tongariro North Domain during a major event

The Tongariro North Domain is the hub for events in town. The large area of grass provides flexibility for a range of different events to take place at the same time. Complementing this is the Great Lake Centre which provides some adjacent indoor space, although the indoor and outdoor spaces are not well connected at present.

While this events space is important for its open space amenity and as a recreational asset it should also be acknowledged as a very important economic asset for the town. The events industry as a whole brings millions of dollars of value to the town over any given year. Events on the Tongariro North Domain and Riverside Park also bring people into the area and provide direct economic benefits to the town centre.

Events like the Lake Taupō Cycle Challenge and the Ironman take up most of the Tongariro North Domain space and are recognised as key events for the town. Similarly, carnivals and the Home Show are regular fixtures. However, one area of opportunity is to further grow the number of smaller events that use the Tongariro Domain. More regular smaller events will assist greatly in activating the public space and will bring benefits to the commercial areas of the town centre.

Improvement of the facilities on the Tongariro Domain to allow for better management of events – both small and large – will have a direct economic benefit for the town centre. Such improvements should not only cater for the few large events, but also look to provide for the potentially many smaller events.

Active Arts

The Active Arts building and associated car park, which is currently located on Redoubt Street, will be relocated. The timing of the relocation will be dependant on finding a new home for the Active Arts activities.

The subsequent removal of this building will help to create a much stronger connection between the Tongariro North Domain and Riverside Park. It will also open up a significant area of open space around the top of the amphitheatre to the west of the realigned Redoubt Street. This flexible space could be used for corporate facilities and other services needed for events in the amphitheatre. The provision of better facilities will in turn mean that Riverside Park is able to be used for a wider variety of events.



A concert in the amphitheatre

Redoubt Street

The realignment of Redoubt Street to the Spa Road roundabout is discussed in the traffic management section of this plan. However, it also has importance for the ongoing use of the Tongariro North Domain.

The design of the existing Redoubt Street has a sealed carriageway of 11 metres with car parking on both sides and kerb and channel. This design creates a barrier between the Tongariro North Domain and the amphitheatre and Riverside Park. To try and break down this barrier the newly realigned portion of Redoubt Street will be designed in a very different way. Instead of kerb and channel the new portion of road will be flush with the grass either side. It will be narrower than the current road and may well be finished in an alternative surface.

The intention is to make the road unobtrusive and easy for pedestrians to cross, while still allowing access, particularly for events servicing.



Redoubt Street looking south toward the Taupō Boat Harbour

Town centre car parking

Car parking in the town centre functions as one large parking pool. Whether car parking is on the street, public land or private land, it all operates as a whole. This supports the efficient and effective functioning of the town centre, and is the most efficient and cost effective way to provide parking in this location.

When people visit the town centre, they park where they can, and do so under whatever restrictions apply, be those public or private restrictions. It is accepted that in respect to public parking, there is no reserved parking space waiting for people in any particular location. This is the nature of town centre parking the world over, and the Taupō town centre is no exception.

Taupō town centre is fortunate to have about 2000 parking spaces at the street kerb, 200 spaces around the Library and Great Lake Centre, and 400 parking spaces on several dedicated off-street sites. Some of the car parks around the Great Lake Centre can be reserved to serve the needs of those attending conferences and other events. Generally the street parking provides for short term parking (60 – 120 minutes) and the off-street spaces provide for all day parking. To this public parking pool is added the numerous parking spaces on private land, ranging from one or two at the rear of shops, to parking areas associated with large retail venues such as supermarkets.



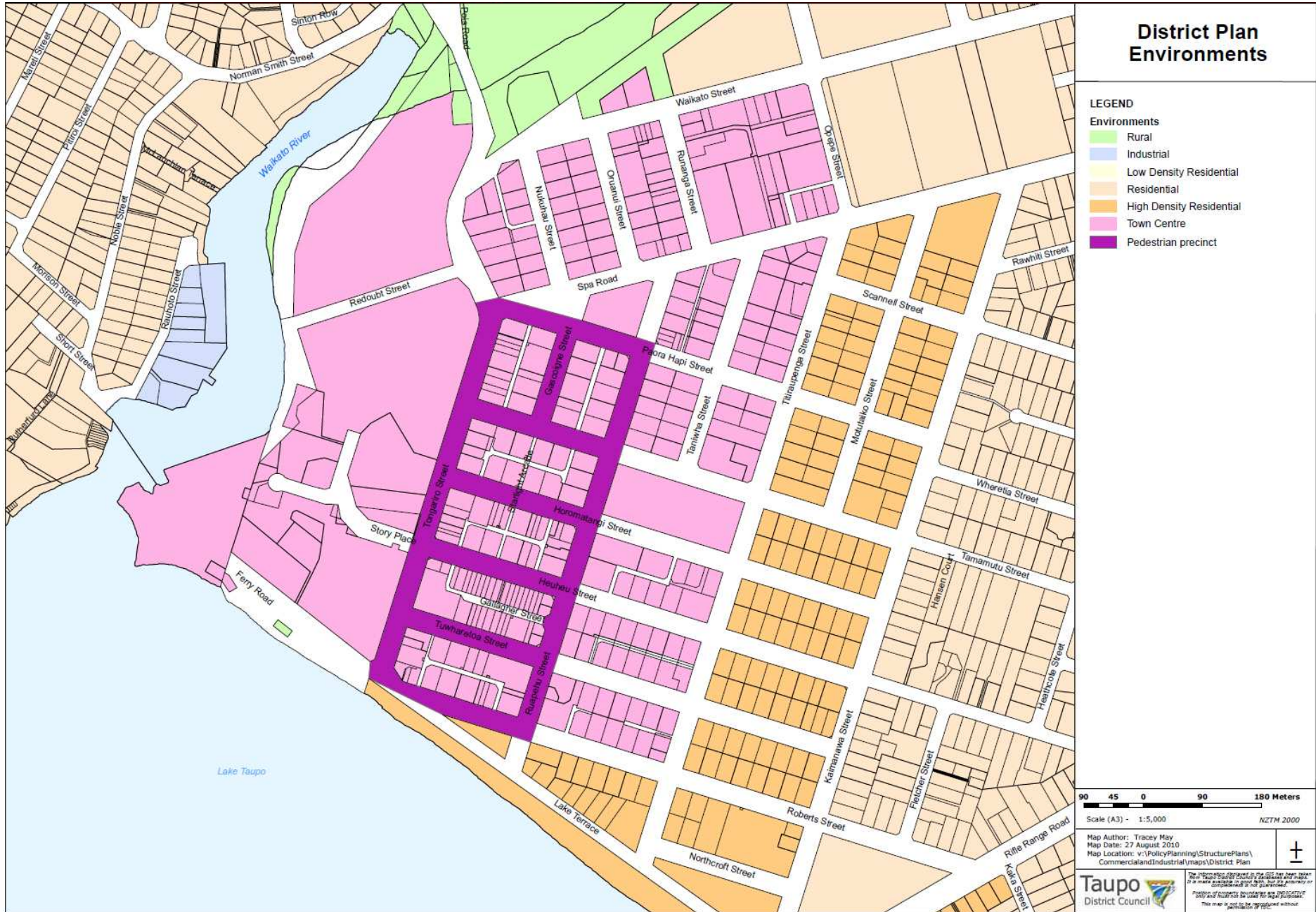
Tuwharetoa Street off street car park

Past studies have looked at parking trends, future parking demands, and solutions for providing additional spaces. These studies have indicated that the town centre is currently well supplied, with short term car parking only coming under some pressure during a few weeks of the year. Over recent years additional parking spaces have been created around the edge of the town by forming angled parks at the street kerb. Once all the street kerbs have been formed with angled parks, it was intended that Council consider developing one or more of the off-street parking areas, depending on the extent of increased demand.

The Structure Plan endorses previous decisions to monitor the situation, and if further car parking spaces are required in the future, to utilise the existing off-street parking areas on Tuwharetoa, Heuheu and Taniwha Streets. This has been determined as the most cost effective solution, and one that maintains the objective of ensuring a compact and walkable town centre.

Part of monitoring and assessing future demand for car parking will be to consider alternatives to creating new parking spaces, such as encouraging increased use of public transport, walking and cycling. The ability for people to find a car park in the town centre can also be improved by managing the existing pool of car parks, for example having a greater variety of time restrictions.

If it is determined that new parking spaces are required, then a decision will be made on which existing off-street parking area is the best location to develop further parks, and how this shall be funded. Funding solutions could involve joint partnerships between Council and the private sector, and could involve different uses such as retail at ground floor with several levels of parking above. To date Council decisions have not supported the introduction of paid parking as a funding solution.



This map is taken from the District Plan and shows the different Environments and existing roading pattern as at September 2010

District Plan provisions

The District Plan currently requires all new building in the Town Centre Environment to provide on-site car parking at a ratio of one parking space per 30m² of gross floor area. This District Plan provision is part of a suite of provisions designed at managing the efficient and effective functioning of the town centre. It is acknowledged that providing sufficient parking spaces for people arriving by car, is an important part of the town centre experience for many people, and helps ensure repeat visits and longer stays in this location.

The car parking ratio of one space per 30m² of building is generally accepted as adequate to serve retail activity. Not all commercial activity requires such a ratio, but the District Plan treats all buildings in the town centre the same regardless of current use, because the planning provisions are based on the life of a building, not the current tenant. However, most buildings contain a range of activities, such as retail or restaurant at ground floor and office above, and this is likely to be the make up of town centre properties for sometime. Therefore it is not unreasonable to conclude that demand for town centre parking could be more aligned with land use activity, rather than building floor area.

The District Plan provisions will be amended to no longer require individual properties to provide on-site parking within the identified "Pedestrian Precinct". The primary reason for this is to encourage redevelopment and intensification of buildings and land use in this location. This is important for the town centre, because intensification will promote more efficient use of land and infrastructure, and the resulting redevelopment will improve the quality of buildings. The Structure Plan has a comprehensive programme of work to streets and the public realm. It is important that private investment also contribute to improving the amenity and quality of the town centre.

There will be a long term consequence of removing the requirement for on-site car parking in the "Pedestrian Precinct". Council will be responsible for the management of parking demand and the solutions that arise in response to any increase in demand. This approach is more efficient and cost effective compared with meeting parking needs on individual properties. Council can also include other elements, such as public transport, into the mix of considerations.

It is not anticipated that the Plan Change will create any immediate or significant change in the demand for car parks, because building redevelopment will still be gradual. Council is already meeting general demand increase because this comes from a growing population and visitor numbers, which results in an increase in the numbers of people visiting the town centre regardless of any new building floor area. Even when there is new building floor area, the increase at ground floor is likely to be retail space and at second floor office space. Adding new retail space to the "Pedestrian Precinct" does not necessarily generate more people attributable to that space, and even if it did, there is no more room within the streets to create additional parking spaces.

If in the future additional car parks are required in the town centre, the only affordable solution is to develop the off-street parking areas. These are already the responsibility of Council, so nothing will really change in respect to car parking management as a result of the Plan Change.

New development beyond the "Pedestrian Precinct" area is likely to involve new activity and considerable increase in ground floor area commercial space, because there are still many larger under utilised sites available for such development. It will not be possible for public parking locations to meet all the increased demand associated with new development in the remainder of the Taupō town centre, so there will continue to be on-site parking requirements in the District Plan. However, it is proposed to amend these provisions to require on-site parking at a ratio of one space per 50m², instead of the current 30m².

Established car parking on streets outside the "Pedestrian Precinct" is presently underutilised, and there are still areas of street kerb yet to be developed with angled parking. Reducing the extent to which parking needs to be provided on-site will not create a problem, because most of the commercial operations in this location have large floor areas compared with the visitors they generate. Additionally, the current surplus of car parking suggests that providing on-site parking at a ratio of one park per 30m² of floor area can result in more on-site car parks than are necessary.

Public transport

Public transport is an important part of any urban area, and although Taupō is a small town population wise, it is important for the future success of the town that public transport is given consideration in the context of ensuring transportation choice. At present, the town has a bus system, and for the foreseeable planning period in the Structure Plan (20 years), this is likely to be the basis of future public transport.

The bus system is dependent on a good network of roads to and from the town centre, and the ability to circulate around the town centre. The preservation of the town centre street grid pattern provides maximum flexibility for future bus routes, enabling routes to be refined in response to future growth and demand.

The compact nature of the town centre means that most facilities and destinations are within a 5-10 minute walk. Future bus routes need to deliver passengers as directly as possible to destinations such as shopping and business, the civic heart, the lakefront and open space.

Having considered earlier transportation work carried out as part of a Town Centre Parking and Transportation Study (2007), it has been decided to leave the current Intercity facility on Gascoigne Street. This facility is adequate for the short to medium term. There are no planned street upgrades in this location over this period that are likely to cause a problem with bus access or parking.

Short stay bus parking for tourist coaches will remain at the south end of Tongariro Street in close proximity to the Information site, Superloo and cafes. There is not a large number of visiting tourist coaches, but they provide an important contribution to the town centre, and there is adequate space to accommodate them in this location.

In the longer term, there may be a need for a new public transportation terminal that includes all the bus services (local, Intercity, and tourist). This is likely to be some time away, and it is not necessary at this stage to predict the nature of the venue, or choose an appropriate site. There are sites available in conjunction with the off-street parking areas, all of which have good access and connection to the town centre, and it is anticipated that these will be investigated further if required.



Public transport options

Building height

One of the consistent messages from the community has been the preservation of the low rise character of the town centre. Balanced with this is the need to meet commercial aspirations to maximise the potential of town centre properties, and encourage a compact town centre location.

Also of growing influence is the desire to promote a greater mix of land uses in the town centre. Encouraging commercial accommodation activities and residential living into the town centre will contribute to greater vibrancy, increased safety – particularly at night – and increased footfall with the associated economic benefits for retailers and food establishments.

Currently the District Plan has an 8m height limit at the front and then a 45 degree plane stretching back into the property. The intent is to shift to a height limit over the entire property of three storeys. This would achieve a reasonable balance between the community desire to maintain a low rise feel to the town centre, while also enabling land owners to achieve redevelopment aspirations.



Developments in the town centre have shown that a variation of one to four stories can be accommodated without being incompatible with the scale of the existing streetscape

Within a three storey limit there is the potential to have a mix of uses like retail, office and residential. Any increase in the number of people living in the town centre is expected to happen slowly. However enabling such change is important if the associated benefits are to be achieved in the long term.

Experience with other District Plan provisions suggests that people tend to build at the maximum allowed. This can create uniformity. In contrast, using the number of storeys as a limit will result in different rooflines and architectural features like gables. It also allows more flexibility for different stud heights to suit the different uses within a building.

It is anticipated that there may be some sites where higher buildings could be appropriate. This might reflect the needs of a particular use like a hotel, or the characteristics of a particular site like a corner site or an entry to the town centre. It is difficult to identify these sites in advance of a specific land use so it is proposed to use the resource consent process to determine appropriate sites based on a particular development scenario.

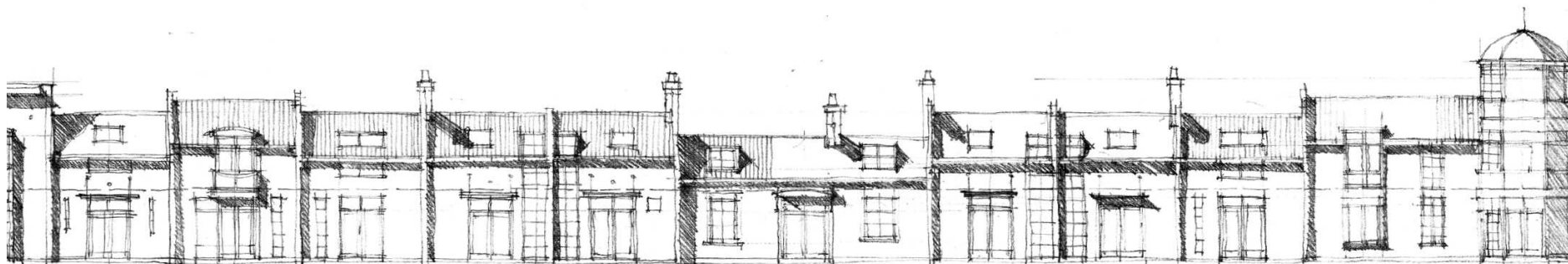
An example from Perth shows how larger buildings can be broken down into smaller components to reduce the perception of bulk



Building bulk, form and scale

The following guidelines on the bulk, form and scale of buildings in the town centre have been taken from the Urban Design Study (2009) by Boffa Miskell. They will be used when formulating the urban design guidelines:

- Building mass, form and scale should generally be compatible with that existing in the street or precinct. A height variation of one to three storeys within a street or block can provide some diversity and visual interest; however continuity of height should be a guiding objective.
- New buildings should be encouraged to build to the maximum allowable height for the given location or precinct. This approach maximises the useable floor area and provides a sense of enclosure to the streetscape.
- Buildings with a larger bulk and mass than is typical in the street or precinct should be visually broken down into smaller components. For bulkier building forms with long street frontages, building modulation should give the impression that the façade is made of multiple finer-grained elements. Breaking a large frontage down should provide more diversity, colour, texture and visual interest.
- Blank walls on street frontages and precinct sidewalls should be avoided. Active edges should be promoted to engage with the public realm.
- Overheight buildings should step down towards the street edge at intervals to integrate with the scale of existing built form.
- Additional building height is often appropriate on key corner sites where a landmark building is desirable. Additional height may also be appropriate where the intention is to frame a focal public space or provide an entry statement.
- Developments on key corner sites should also explore options for additional set back at street level to provide a larger pedestrian area and well defined entry.
- Façade elements such as awnings and verandahs should be continued around street corners. Generally, a higher level of detailing, material quality and lighting should be expected for a corner site. Corner buildings should relate effectively to both street frontages.
- Narrow lots and building frontages are encouraged, particularly in the core retail streets and around key public spaces. Typically building frontages of 7 to 12 metres provide a rhythm, grain and variety that contribute to an attractive streetscape.
- Building envelopes should be mapped to ensure that sunlight can reach the south side footpath of all east-west streets throughout the year. Shadow diagrams should be produced for overheight buildings to demonstrate the potential effects on solar access.
- Where large format retail is proposed within the retail core or retail expansion precinct, it should be sleeved by smaller tenancies to create an active and fine grained edge to the street.



Taupō Boat Harbour

Throughout the preparation of Structure Plan, and in particular, during the public consultation process, it became clear that the Taupō Boat Harbour was seen by many people as a hidden jewel in the town centre's crown. Presently suffering from poor signage and promotion, the potential of the Taupō Boat Harbour to add another dimension for people visiting the wider town centre location is huge, but yet untapped.

The Structure Plan also considers the Taupō Boat Harbour to be an important place because it is the only location where people visiting the town centre can make easy contact with the Lake. The remainder of the lake edge consists of an escarpment which runs for over a kilometre along Lake Terrace to the east. At the Taupō Boat Harbour, people have both a swimming beach at the lakeside, and vehicle, cycle and pedestrian access to the marina and around the river edge. There are opportunities to provide commercial activities such as cafes, and the added dimension all this provides, will encourage people to stay longer in the wider town centre location.

While the Taupō Boat Harbour is within the Structure Plan study area, and is zoned Town Centre Environment in the District Plan, the Landing Reserve is administered by the Department of Internal Affairs in consultation with other parties, and is therefore subject to development limitations beyond Council's control.

The Structure Plan does not attempt to redesign this location, or determine the most appropriate use. It does however, recognise the potential of the Taupō Boat Harbour, and Council has signalled that working in partnership with the various controlling parties will be key to achieving enhancements to this location.

The Structure Plan does discuss improving access to the Taupō Boat Harbour through the Tongariro Domain. One of the reasons there are not more visitors to this location is that neither of the access points from Ferry Road at the south end, and Redoubt Street to the north are enticing, and walking through the Tongariro Domain is not a clearly defined route. The Structure Plan proposes extending Story Place to better connect the commercial area and Civic Heart with the Lake and the Taupō Boat Harbour.

In the short term it is intended to improve pedestrian access at the end of Story Place down to the Taupō Boat Harbour, and create an entrance feature. This access point can then be upgraded to include vehicle access in the longer term. There will still be vehicle access by way of Ferry Road, and the realigned Redoubt Street. Improved access and identification in this location, provides the opportunity for expanding the range of activity, when land owners and relevant parties decide appropriate.



The beach at the Landing Reserve is the closest location to the town centre where people have ready access to the Lake