

## **DISCUSSION DOCUMENT**

# **INVERCARGILL CITY CENTRE**

## **OUTLINE ACTION PLAN**

**FOR INVERCARGILL CITY COUNCIL**

**DECEMBER 2011**

PREPARED BY

URBANISMPPLUS LTD

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## **DISCUSSION DOCUMENT**

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## **OUTLINE ACTION PLAN**

### **FOR INVERCARGILL CITY COUNCIL**

*This report is a summary of the outcomes of a four-day series of consultation and working sessions. Many of the analysis maps within this report have been produced in a workshop context and are indicative only. Their main aim is to provide background to the Priorities for Action. The projects identified within this report should also be considered indicative only.*

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## PREFACE



Early in its current term, the Invercargill City Council identified Invercargill's City Centre as one of its top priorities.

The City Centre has lost its "wow" factor. This is the result of a combination of a large number of issues, none of which can be resolved by the Council, the business community, or other groups on their own.

This report is the result of this year's investigations by the Inner City Working Group established by the Council in February 2011. I gratefully acknowledge the enthusiasm and energy of the members of the Working Group, who have contributed freely to regular meetings and workshops. I also acknowledge the open and generous contribution of the large number of people who have taken part in several consultation sessions and workshops during the year.

In August the Working Group reported to Council on what it saw as the eight key transformative issues and what might be done about them. The Council endorsed the Working Group's conclusions, and that endorsement was echoed by the general public in the consultation that followed.

This report takes the process a stage further. It indicates, in some detail, some recommendations that can be undertaken very soon, in reasonable confidence that they are the right things to do. Other actions are scoped at a higher level and need further research and informed debate.

The report has been compiled by a team led by Kobus Mentz of Urbanismplus – a planning and urban design consultancy

with international experience. We have benefited from Kobus' experience and perspectives. The project has involved Invercargill-based planning consultant William Watt and Christchurch-based landscape architect Craig Pocock. The project has been directed by the Council's Directors of Environmental and Planning Services, Pamela Gare, and Works and Services, Cameron McIntosh.

This is a discussion document for general comment from the public and other stakeholders. It is to be placed before the Council on December 13 with a view to its being "received" and placed in the public arena for information and comment. Early in 2012 the recommendations of the report, together with any further stakeholder or public comment, will again be considered by the Council. That is when priorities for the forthcoming financial year can be set.

Comments can be emailed to: [ep.secretaries@icc.govt.nz](mailto:ep.secretaries@icc.govt.nz) or mailed to Invercargill City Centre, C/o Invercargill City Council, Private Bag 91014, Invercargill, by 28 February 2012.

Cr Norman Elder  
CHAIRMAN – INNER CITY WORKING  
GROUP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norman Elder', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The outcomes of an urban design-led project aimed at revitalising the Invercargill City Centre are summarised in this report.

The Invercargill City Council (ICC) has adopted revitalisation of the city centre as one of its key priorities for the current term. The Council has appointed the Inner City Working Group (the Working Group) as a standing committee of the Council. It consists of stakeholders with a business interest in the city centre, and with representation from the Council on both staff and elected members levels.

During a half day workshop in July 2011, facilitated and organised by Urbanismplus and William J. Watt Consulting the Working Group further considered the following:

- Identification of the issues facing the city centre.
- Discussion and mapping of established issues.
- Prioritisation of issues.
- Identification of a process for the way forward.

The workshop identified eight priority issues to be addressed and leading to what are intended the most transformative solutions. This Outline Action Plan focuses on these priorities, which include:

- A. City centre promotion and events
- B. City centre focus in Council policies and actions
- C. Business development and attraction
- D. Heritage protection and enhancement
- E. Car parking
- F. The improved integration of Tay and Dee Streets
- G. Public spaces
- H. Arts, culture and interpretation

Although reported on and explained one by one, these issues are not seen in isolation from each other. Solutions and responses to each form part of one integrated vision for the city centre. Strong links and overlaps exist between these and a larger number of the proposals is mutually reinforcing.

During a series of working and consultation sessions in October 2011, the consultant team engaged with a large

number of stakeholders and the general public in order to gain a thorough understanding of the issues facing the city centre, and work through ideas aimed at revitalising it.

This Outline Action Plan is a summary report documenting the findings and the proposed next steps. It suggests and explains actions that can be undertaken in the short term with reasonable certainty as well as investigations and technical work to be resolved in order to progress longer term initiatives. The main recommended and proposed initiatives include the following:

### **Priority A. City centre communication and promotion**

- Development of a promotion strategy for the city.
- Development of an events strategy.

### **Priority B. City centre focus in Council policies and actions**

- Review of city centre relevant issues in the Spatial Plan, District Plan, LTCCP and other policies.
- Review of relocation of the Visitor Information Centre to the city centre.

### **Priority C. Business development and attraction**

- Business Attraction Strategy based on a business survey and statistical analysis of economic data.
- Consideration of identification and promotion of Business Precincts.

### **Priority D. Heritage protection and enhancement**

- Prioritisation for protection and enhancement of heritage buildings.
- Improvement of the position of heritage buildings in the Councils policies and actions.
- Developing the city as a centre of excellence for earthquake strengthening of heritage buildings, through demonstration projects and possibly hosting a conference.

### **Priority E. Car parking**

- Detailed parking study.
- Options to consider for the development of on-street and off-street public parking provision.

- Investigation of parking signage, campervan parking, tour coach parking, disabled car parks and bike parking.

### **Priority F. The improved integration of Tay and Dee Streets**

- Weather protection for pedestrians around traffic lights at the State Highways.
- On-street parking to replace part of the long bus bays in two locations on Dee Street.
- Investigation of a reduction in traffic lanes in Tay Street in favour of centre parking and areas of planting in the median.
- Investigation of changes to the traffic light timing in favour of pedestrians.
- Investigation of the feasibility of a right turn into Esk Street for northbound traffic.
- Investigation of whether relocation of the Visitor Information Centre and the Southland Museum and Art Gallery will help overcome, or conversely, worsen the severance.

### **Priority G. Public spaces**

- Investigation of open space opportunities for the area within the green belt and for the city centre.
- Upgrade proposals for the furniture and lighting in Esk Street.
- A public space in Esk Street.
- Improvements to Wachner Place.
- A footpath upgrade programme.
- Proposals for a city centre market space.

### **Priority H. Arts, culture and interpretation**

- Organisational improvements.
- Encouragement of local art in public places.
- Investigation of an arts centre in the city centre.
- Investigation of the relocation of the Southland Museum and Art Gallery to the city centre.
- Encouragement to owners of vacant or underutilised buildings to accommodate local artist and SIT fine arts and music students.
- Investigation of the merits of an arts precinct.

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# SECTION 1 introduction

*This section contains information  
about the project and this report*

## 1.1 About the project

The Invercargill City Centre is under threat. It has lost energy to the Large Format Retail area on Leven Street, especially since a recent relocation of a department store in that area. Other threats include the rise of on-line shopping and the severance caused by the State Highways, with the associated loss of on-street parking. A particular area of concern is the future of the area south of Tay Street.

This signals the need for a proactive approach to the city centre that addresses all the key issues. The Invercargill City Council (ICC) has adopted revitalisation of the city centre as one of its main priorities for the current term and has given Councillor Norman Elder responsibility for leading the project. The Council has also appointed the Inner City Working Group (the Working Group) as a standing committee of the Council. It consists of stakeholders with a business interest in the city centre, and with representation from the Council on both staff and elected members levels.

### THE JULY 2011 WORKSHOP

Following on from earlier meetings, on 18 July 2011 the Working Group held a half day workshop to further consider the key issues that need to be addressed and to produce a provisional list of priorities.

The workshop was attended by members of the Invercargill Inner City Working Group and selected local consultants who may have an interest in participating in delivering some of the implementation actions. It covered the following:

- Identification of the problem.
- Discussion and mapping of established issues.
- Prioritisation of issues.
- Identification of a process for the way forward.

The workshop was opened by Cr Norman Elder, organised by Bill Watt (William J. Watt Consulting) and facilitated by Kobus Mentz with support from Wayne Bredemeijer (both Urbanismplus).

In response to the question “which would be the most transformative solutions” the workshop identified eight priority issues. As a result of this workshop a project aimed at producing an Outline Action Plan focussing on the eight priorities was formulated. These eight priorities are introduced in Section 3 of this report.

### SPATIAL PROJECT SCOPE

The Inner City Working Group described the spatial scope of the project as the area bounded by an imaginary triangle formed by H&J Department Store, The Warehouse, and The Crescent. However, the Working Group also acknowledged the importance of the SIT just outside the core area. The area within the green belt and east of the railway line was considered as the study area for this Action Plan (refer to Figure 1-1) with a detailed focus on ‘the triangle’.

### THE ACTION PLAN PROJECT

This project represents a major opportunity for Invercargill to develop a strategy that secures and strengthens the city centre’s future by:

- Providing a coherent vision and the sequence of strategic initiatives required to achieve it.
- Gaining the confidence of the business sector and wider community as well as their support for the strategy framework.
- Identifying opportunities to boost prosperity and employment.
- Defining and countering risks that may weaken retail viability and diminish built and open space character.

It should be emphasised that these simple objectives are very complex to achieve as first of all, development and market needs have to be reconciled with the public good. Also, many different stakeholders and technical disciplines have to be integrated, often with legitimate, yet competing aspirations.

For these reasons the project was undertaken following the process as described overleaf.



ABOVE FIG. 1-1: The spatial scope of the Action Plan. The area outlined in red represents the ‘triangle’ referred to by the Working Group as the core of the city centre. However, for the purpose of this project the area of interest is roughly bounded by the green belt to the north, east and south and the railway line to the west.

### CONSULTANT TEAM

Urbanismplus Ltd is the main consultant for this project and its role has been to assist the Council by managing participants, facilitating working and consultation sessions, generating urban design-based ideas and documenting findings. In order to do this Urbanismplus has collaborated with a small team of specialist consultants consisting of:

- William J. Watt Consulting Ltd, resource management and city / town planning.
- Pocock Design:Environment Ltd, landscape architects and sustainability specialists.

Along with Urbanismplus these consultants were involved in developing the work contained in this document.



## 1.2 Consultation and working sessions

Following on from the Inner City Working Group workshops before and in July 2011, the consultant team has undertaken a large number of meetings in order to gain a thorough understanding of the issues facing the city centre, and work through ideas aimed at revitalising it. The programme consisted of the following meetings:

### 18 October 2011:

- Staff members of the Invercargill City Council.
- Representatives of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, Southland Museum Trust Board, and local Iwi.
- Representatives of the Southern Institute of Technology.
- The Inner City Working Group.

### 19 October 2011:

- Representatives from Venture Southland, Vibrant Invercargill, and Community Trust of Southland.
- Representatives from the New Zealand Transport Agency.
- Representatives from the Chamber of Commerce.
- Mayor and Councillors of the Invercargill City Council.
- Interested members of the community.

### 20 October 2011:

- Local arts and culture representatives.
- Representatives from the Invercargill Licensing Trust.

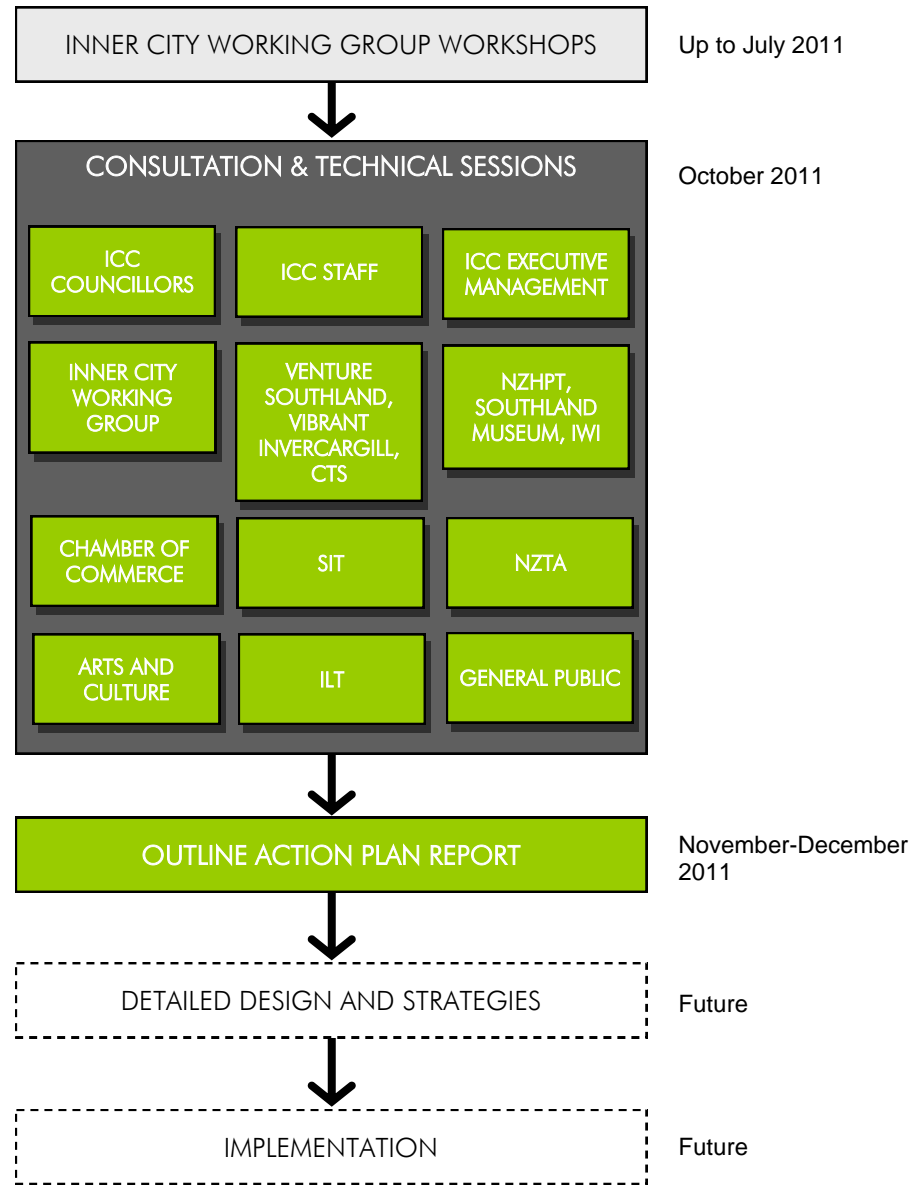
### 21 October 2011:

- Invercargill City Council executive management team.

The findings of these consultation and technical sessions were analysed and synthesised, leading to a number of recommendations for action or further study.

This Outline Action Plan presents concept designs for some options. It is envisaged that the recommendations in this report will be taken further into detailed plans and designs as part of a project or series of projects.

This may include formal consultation on all or a number of elements. This stage will be followed by implementation, although this will not necessarily be sequential as certain elements and strategies may be implemented before other elements are designed and consulted upon.



ABOVE FIG. 1-2: Structure of the project



### 1.3 About this report

This Outline Action Plan is a summary report documenting the findings and the proposed next steps. It suggests and explains actions that can be undertaken in the short term with reasonable certainty as well as investigations and technical work to be resolved in order to progress longer term initiatives.

Section 2 contains an assessment of the state the city centre is in, the opportunities and threats it is facing, and the key outcomes of the consultation with the community and stakeholders.

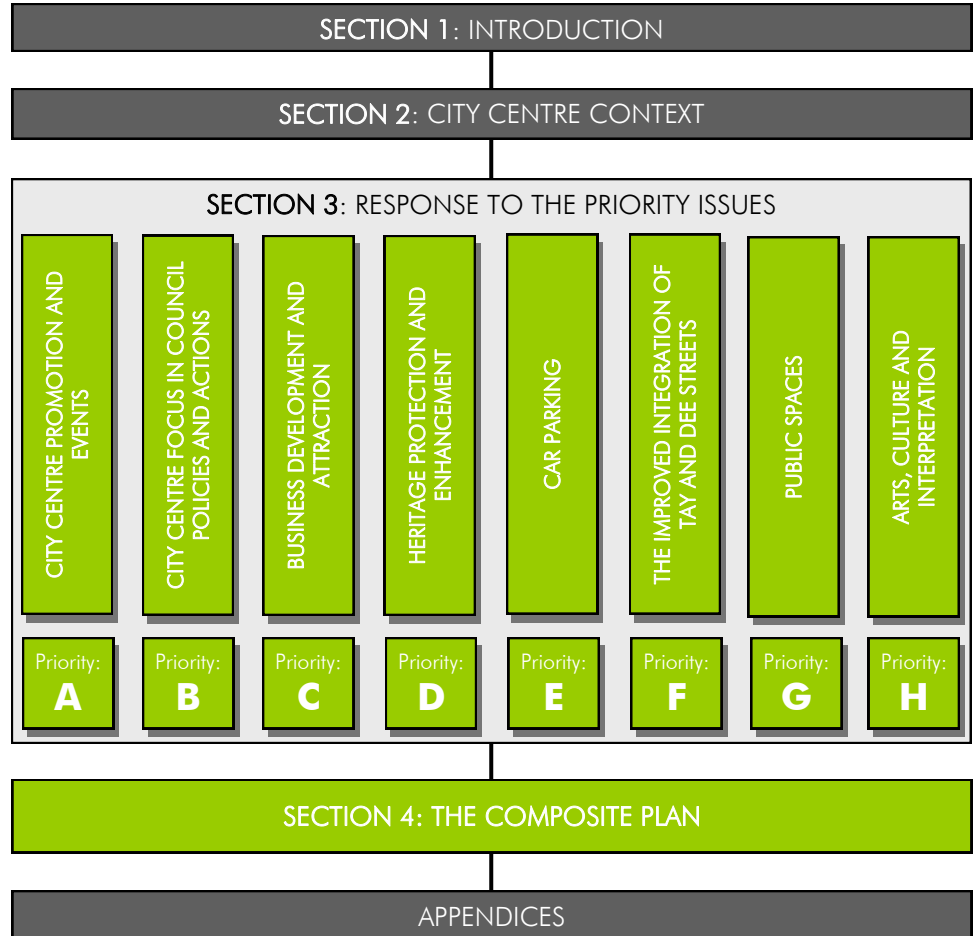
Section 3 introduces the proposals in response to the priorities identified by the Inner City Working Group, which include:

- Priority A. City centre promotion and events.
- Priority B. City centre focus in Council policies and actions.
- Priority C. Business development and attraction.
- Priority D. Heritage protection and enhancement.
- Priority E. Car parking.
- Priority F. The improved integration of Tay and Dee Streets.
- Priority G. Public spaces.
- Priority H. Arts, culture and interpretation.

The context of each of these are described, along with the main issues associated, the recommended solutions and possible further study required.

Section 4 contains a graphic representation of the plan combining all recommended actions under the eight priorities.

Detailed background material is provided in the appendices.



ABOVE FIG. 1-3: Structure of the report

**SECTION 2****city centre context**

*This section contains an assessment of the state the city centre is in, the opportunities and threats it is facing, and the key outcomes of the consultation with the community and stakeholders*

## 2.1 Framework of principles

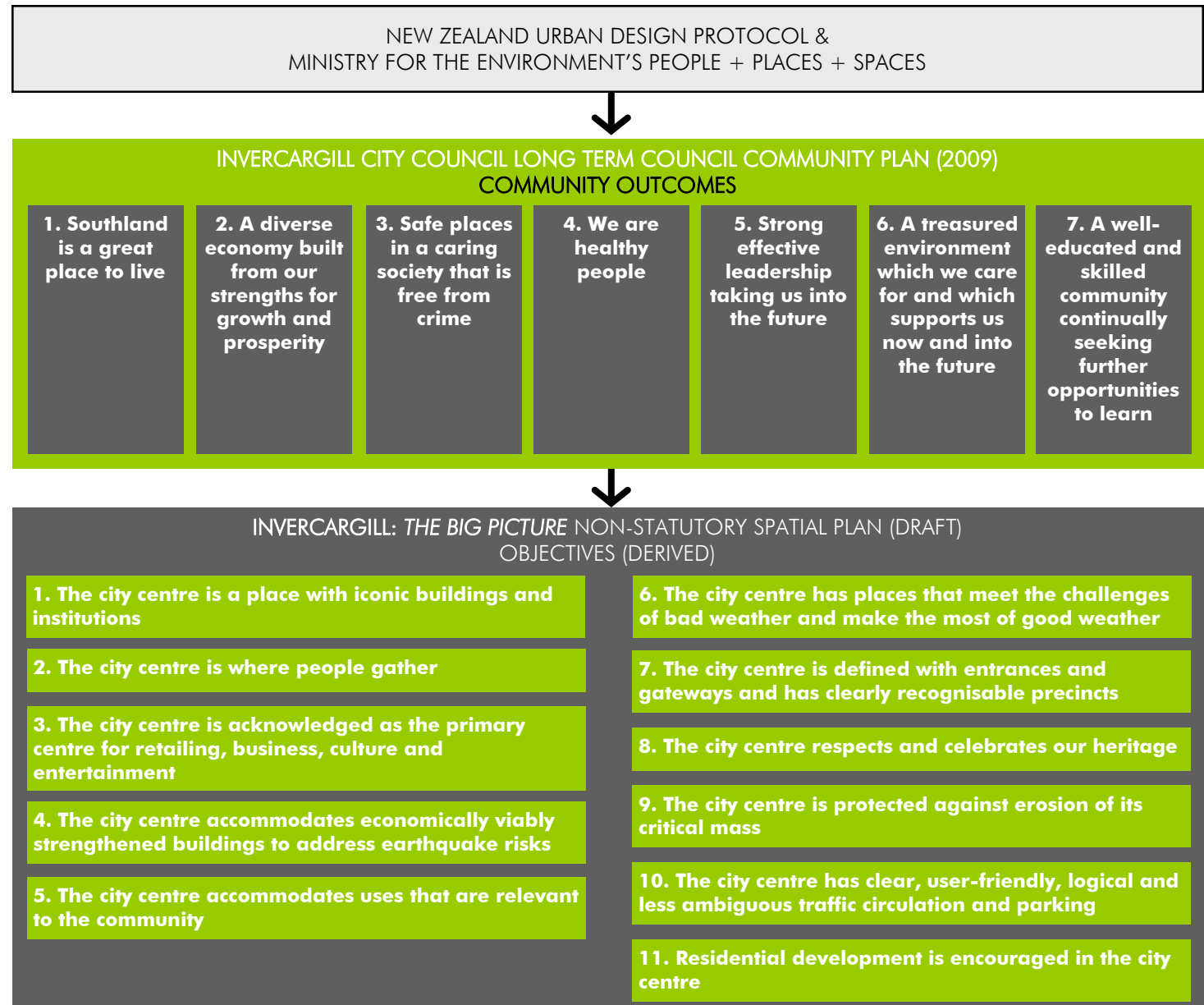
Figure 2-1 illustrates a framework of criteria to assess how the Invercargill city centre is currently doing, and more importantly to assess proposals aimed at improving its performance.

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and the Ministry for the Environment's People + Places + Spaces (2005) contain broad objectives applicable to urban design in New Zealand. The ICC is signatory to the Urban Design Protocol and the current project demonstrates commitment to the intent of the protocol.

In the Council's Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) seven broad Community Outcomes describe the aspirations that the community has for its area (Figure 2-1). As these are shared among the various local Councils in Southland, these outcomes are not solely applicable to Invercargill. However, since these outcomes have a broad nature they could be used as assessment criteria.

The Council is currently working on its non-statutory Spatial Plan. For each area within the City, including the city centre, a number of Values and Issues are identified. From these, 11 objectives could be derived (Figure 2-1).

The Community Outcomes and the Spatial Plan Objectives are used as assessment criteria to assess the initiatives proposed in this report.



RIGHT FIG. 2-1: Assessment criteria for the revitalisation of the city centre

## 2.2 Opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses

The following analysis of the Invercargill City Centre is based on observations by the consultant team and second hand accounts from conversations with stakeholders.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Relatively isolated position of Invercargill could in some instances mean less competition from elsewhere.
- Presence of the nearby green belt and easy links with Queens Park.
- Observable group of nightlife establishments forming on Dee Street.
- Presence of the railway station within walking distance from the city centre.
- Possible links between the city centre and the Large Format Retail area.
- Presence of students studying at the Southern Institute of Technology within the city centre.
- The age of many buildings means there are opportunities for renovation or redevelopment.
- A number of empty shop fronts and underutilised buildings waiting to be filled.
- Presence of groupings of similar businesses or activities that could be further developed into recognisable precincts.
- Development and redevelopment options are being considered, for which there is an opportunity for activity centre location or relocation.

### THREATS

- That the trend of relocation of businesses and institutions (major employers) to areas outside the core of the city centre will continue.
- Large stock of buildings that do not meet the earthquake strengthening requirements pose an earthquake risk.
- Low population and employment growth.
- Ageing population.
- Decreasing household sizes.
- Global Financial Crisis.
- Increase of Internet shopping threatening conventional retailing.
- Perceived or real lack of coordinated policy and action reinforcing the role, viability and vitality of the Invercargill City Centre as the central place and hub of a provincial city of 50,000 people, a region of 100,000, and a highly productive rural hinterland.
- That the trend of decline in pedestrian numbers will continue.

### STRENGTHS

- Location of the city centre in a city laid out on a classical grid pattern which promotes economy and ease of movement.
- Location of the city centre on high ground that is free from the hazards of sea level rise, storm surge, riverine inundation or liquefaction.
- Large stock of heritage buildings, some of which have been renovated and strengthened to modern standards.
- Legible block structure.
- Flat terrain making walking and cycling easy.
- Much exposure to passing traffic on State Highways 1 and 6.
- Many pedestrian crossing points (including zebra crossings) across the State Highways.
- Large Format Retail complex close to the city centre that may help attract customers to the city centre, as opposed to an 'out-of-centre' threat.
- The Southland Institute of Technology main campus is close to the city centre and the Institute has a significant departmental presence within it.
- Presence of iconic and nationally recognised retailers such as H & J Smiths, E A Hayes and Sons, as well as specialty and fashion shops that are highly regarded regionally (e.g. Liz Thomas, Julie Bryce for women's fashions, Mc Knight and Brown and Fredericks for menswear).
- Identifiable groupings of activities (e.g. the Don Street legal, the Kelvin Street banking, Esk Street comparative retail and cafes).

### WEAKNESSES

- Lack of green spaces and vegetation in the area within the green belt.
- Poor connections to elements of the nearby green belt south of Tay Street.
- Lack of open spaces appropriate for formal civic occasions (Wachner Place is unable to perform this role due to its design).
- Lack of activities and places for children.
- Lack of public seating.
- Insufficient protection against the elements.
- Vacant shops, especially in and around Cambridge Place and south of Tay Street.
- Dilapidated and underutilised heritage buildings.
- Poorly maintained verandas.
- Severance by the State Highways.
- Many street blocks containing frontages that are not active (i.e. pedestrian friendly). Poor definition of the street edge (e.g. large areas of surface parking, large building setbacks), particularly in the area just outside the triangular area of focus, leading to an uninteresting pedestrian experience.
- Lack of places and activities that would be attractive to young people, for whom there is little incentive to visit and use the city centre.
- Many businesses have moved out of the City Centre.

### 2.3 City centre edge vitality

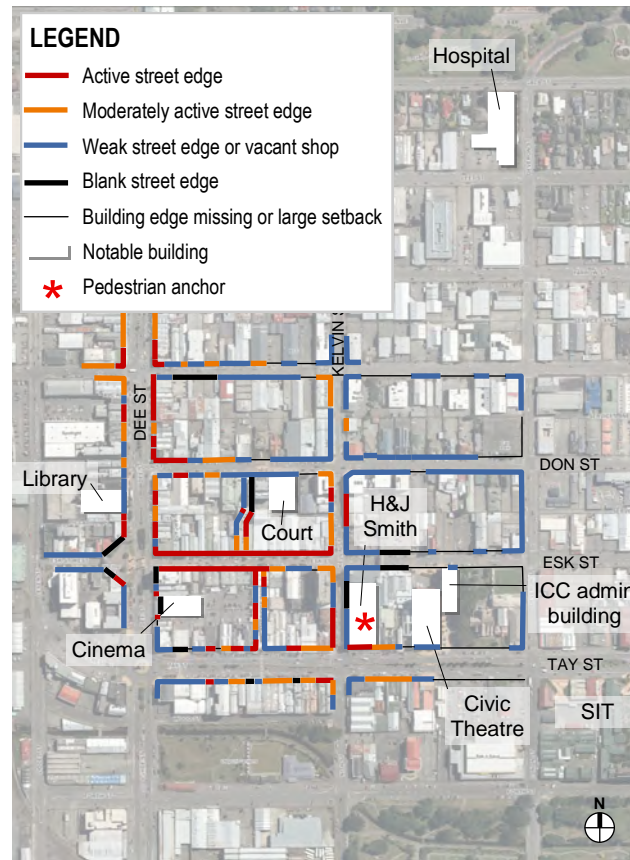
In order to define a response to the issues facing the city centre it is important to first understand how the city centre works from a retail functional point of view. Where is the city centre strong? Where is it weaker?

Figure 2-2 shows the day-time 'edge vitality' of the city centre, which is an analysis of how active and attractive the built street edges are to the pedestrian. This is a function of how well the retail is doing. Refer to the legend:

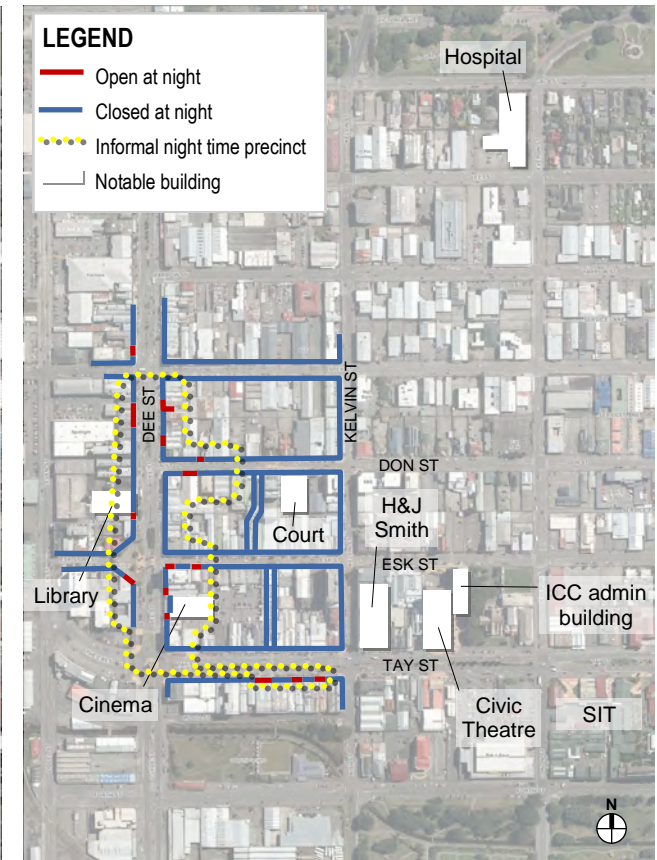
- 'Active' means a very attractive, fine-grain, well-detailed, pedestrian oriented building presenting itself to the footpath.
- 'Moderately active' means a fairly active pedestrian oriented building on the edge of the footpath.
- 'Weak' means a vacant building or a building with few windows on eye level facing the footpath, resulting in little or no visual relationship between the footpath and the interior of the building.
- 'Blank' means a building with no windows facing the footpath.
- 'Building edge missing or large setback' means that there is no interaction possible between a pedestrian on the footpath and the building, due to a large setback that forms a barrier or the fact that the site is not accommodating any building.
- 'Notable building' means notable from a community point of view.
- The H&J Smith department store is defined as a pedestrian anchor.

It should be noted that Esk Street between Dee and Kelvin Streets accommodates the most active and attractive edges, followed by Dee Street north of Esk Street and Tay Street between the 'Banks Corner' and the Civic Theatre. The western part of Don Street as well as limited parts of Kelvin Street are also pedestrian oriented retail areas.

Figure 2-3 shows the night-time 'edge vitality'; businesses that are open after office hours as well as the cinema.



ABOVE FIG. 2-2: Edge vitality (day-time)



ABOVE FIG. 2-3: Edge vitality (night-time)

The Civic Theatre may be an occasional night-time attraction. An informal night-life group along the State Highways and the western parts of Esk and Don Street is noticeable.



## 2.4 The messages received from the community

The consultant team met with members of the community who responded to a public invitation to attend a meeting on 19 October 2011 to discuss ideas for the city centre. Those who participated were divided in small groups and were given pens, paper, and maps to write and sketch their ideas, suggestions, and complaints. An overview of the sometimes contradictory outcomes is included below.

### HERITAGE AND BUILDING QUALITY

Those present identified the following general comments:

- The Invercargill community is used to heritage buildings. These should be celebrated and recognised.
- Heritage buildings should be left in a better state than the owner received. The Council and the Government should help by instituting a fund (part loan) attached to each individual building that the owner can draw from for maintenance and strengthening. The loan is paid back via rates. Others did not agree with these suggestions and wondered why the community should pay for the maintenance of somebody else's building. Perhaps only a contribution to strengthening certain buildings or measures to save these, not the upkeep, would be acceptable.
- The Council could create jobs by employing people who are involved in strengthening and up keeping of buildings.
- Verandas could be strengthened to protect people on the street during an earthquake.
- Low rents inhibit investment in heritage buildings.
- Verandas should be retained to provide weather protection and a streetscape that has a human scale to it.
- Education for landlords is needed to explain that maintenance pays off for attracting and retaining tenants.
- Many verandas have leaking spouting.
- There should be a greater focus on the cleanliness of the facades of heritage and other buildings.
- There should be incentives to paint facades.

- Only facades of heritage buildings should be retained. The rest of the building could be rebuilt.

### MOVEMENT

Those present identified the following general comments:

- Alleyways should be developed to break up large blocks. An example includes the link from the Warehouse towards the city centre. Perhaps this lane should be closed off at night and lighting could be installed to make it safe.
- One building should be taken out to connect between to Tay Street, Wood Street and through to the Otepunu Gardens. This could be combined with development of the Southland Museum in this block. Specific building were suggested for demolition to make space for this.
- Trams should be reinstated, partly as public transport replacing some buses, but also as a visitor attraction.
- Esk Street should be turned into a pedestrian mall and covered. Others did not agree with this statement.
- Smaller electric buses should replace the current large diesel buses.
- The Crescent should become a coach stop and campervan parking area, associated with a new information centre in this area.
- The bus stop on the corner of Nith Street should be shifted to the YMCA corner.

### OPEN SPACE

Those present identified the following general comments:

- The area around the Blade of Grass artwork could be used more intensively as public open space.
- Wachner Place, Lower Esk Street and The Crescent should be revitalised as public open spaces.
- The area inside the Tay, Dee, Esk, Kelvin Streets block, currently the Central Tay car park, could be redeveloped as a public open space accommodating markets, a skate park and event space.
- The Otepunu Gardens used to be the centre of activity for young people and has the potential to become that again.
- Wachner Place is unpleasant, windy and cold, and has lost its liveliness.

- Trees should be planted to break the wind in and around Wachner Place.
- Wachner Place should be demolished and could be used as a bus station.
- Wachner Place is not the central focus point for the city centre. A new main public open space is needed.
- The Blade of Grass area should be softened with grass.
- Many of the public areas in the city centre have uneven surfaces and stains on the pavement.

### TOWN CENTRE VITALITY

Those present identified the following general comments:

- Revitalisation efforts should focus on the area bounded by Tay, Dee, Don, Deveron Streets.
- Focus revitalisation efforts on the arcades and leave the streets as they are.
- More public life in the street is needed. Buskers and creative people should be attracted.
- About 200-300 people are currently living in the city centre. To increase city centre vibrancy, this number should go up. In order to attract residents in the centre, an enquiry of what city centre residents are not happy with is needed.
- The city centre lacks activities for children. The skate park and the swimming pool are too far out from the centre.
- The city centre should be able to accommodate the farmer's market. For this a purpose built structure is needed.
- The Visitor Information Centre, the Southland Museum, and the Art Gallery should be relocated to help bring more life to the city centre.
- The Southland Museum should be shifted to Tay Street with an internal connection between Tay Street and the Otepunu Gardens.
- Esk Street West should be developed for cafes.
- Don Street is slowly developing in a positive direction.
- Vacant shop fronts should be used for the display of art. The windows of empty shops should at least be cleaned.

The Council also invited the public to have their say on these issues via a manned city centre shop which was open for a period of eleven days (23 September - 3 October 2011). People were encouraged to drop in and share their ideas, with the opportunity for feedback being advertised in the newspaper and radio. A number of people also provided written submissions.

The consultation asked a number of questions and several common themes can be identified. Below is an adaptation of the summary section of *Revitalisation of Invercargill's City Centre, Public Feedback and Suggestions Report prepared for Invercargill City Council, by Nicole Taylor, 17 October 2011.*

Main findings of this community consultation include:

- The city centre should be consolidated into a more condensed space to create a heart to the city with Council to be more directive for this to happen. Neighbouring residential areas should be revitalised to grow the number of residents using the city centre.
- The city centre should give the impression of being full and busy. Therefore ways of using vacant retail space should be considered. Relocating other facilities into the centre, e.g. the arts centre or a mall, should also be considered.
- An attractive social and lifestyle centre should be created as well as retail space so that the city centre becomes a recreation destination with activities. Buildings should be improved as well as public spaces that facilitate opportunities for social exchange. Also the café culture should be developed. Traffic should be removed from key areas to create the right atmosphere.
- The concept of shopping precincts or clustering shops together is supported. The possibility of a mall type facility or a food court was suggested.
- Activities and events in the city centre should be encouraged and annual events with associated city centre promotion should be focussed on.
- Activities for children and young people should be provided within the city centre, along with facilities which cater for parents with young children.

- The local climate is seen as an important issue that influences the experience of shopping in and visiting the city centre. In order to make this a pleasant experience at all times, Invercargill needs outdoor spaces which are warm and sheltered from the weather, while still allowing for natural sunshine. This includes better links for pedestrians, including to and from parking facilities.
- Public places should have attractive planting and seating and be located in an attractive context.
- Retention of heritage buildings is important. However, it should not come at the expense of the main goal, which is the revitalisation of the centre as a whole.

While opinions obviously varied about what should be done about it, there are common themes running through these comments:

- Invercargill people care deeply about the future of the city centre and want it to be a vibrant, active space relevant to today's community
- The city centre is underperforming. It lacks the levels of physical comfort and safety and the levels of amenity necessary for people to entice people to move around the city centre.
- There should be a coordinated and long-term effort to locate activities in the city centre that can help add to its vibrancy and critical mass.
- The need for innovative ways to celebrate our heritage and use our heritage buildings is widely recognised.
- Better planning for and integration of transport modes (car, bus, cycle, walk) is needed.
- The city centre should be people-friendly.



**SECTION 3****response to the priority issues**

*This section introduces the priorities identified by the Inner City Working Group, and describes the associated recommended actions, the rationale behind these, and the possible need for further study*

Priority:  
**A**

# City centre promotion and events

RELATES MOST STRONGLY TO:

LTCCP COMMUNITY OUTCOME  
**2. A diverse economy built from our strengths for growth and prosperity**

SPATIAL PLAN (DRAFT) OBJECTIVES  
**2. The city centre is where people gather**  
**3. The city centre is acknowledged as the primary centre for retailing, business, culture and entertainment**  
**5. The city centre accommodates uses that are relevant to the community**

**OBJECTIVE**  
Central to Priority A is the objective to communicate a clear and attractive message which promotes Invercargill and its city centre, with the ultimate goal that more people visit, and new businesses locate in the city centre. At the same time this is also about encouraging the business and resident community so they act with more pride, vigour and ownership of the city centre.

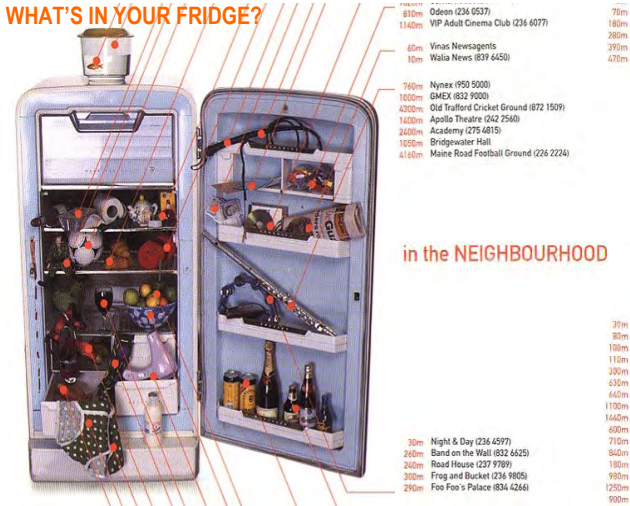
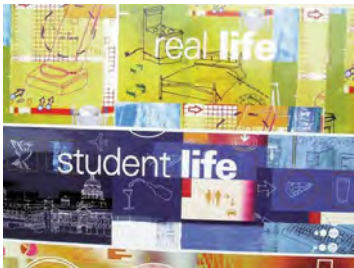
**CONTEXT**  
Invercargill's current mayor is and has been focussing on promoting the image of the city as a centre of innovation (e.g. the Free Fees Scheme) and a place where interesting people live and where interesting things happen. Despite these efforts and like many other cities, Invercargill may still suffer from out-dated and incorrect perceptions about the city and its assets. As a result its position and uniqueness may be undersold.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION**  
Identification and then change to possibly incorrect or outdated perceptions currently held about the city (and specifically the city centre) is needed. This would be followed by a focus on new initiatives that will improve its identity and reputation into the future. All initiatives and future work undertaken by the Council should look to contribute to building the city's reputation as a place of opportunities for lifestyle, employment and leisure. This obviously applies to Invercargill as a whole, but the city centre as the physical centre of the community plays (or perhaps should play) a pivotal role in this.

A promotion strategy that is effectively a reputation change programme would empower the community to redefine tangibly what it is, and can be, that makes Invercargill's centre special. It will empower the Council and other stakeholder groups to effectively communicate this verbally, visually, culturally and professionally.

- The communications process can roughly be divided into three stages:
1. Shift perceptions about the City and specifically the city centre.
  2. Communicate the promotions strategy.
  3. Communicate progress every step along the way.

- A promotion strategy for Invercargill should include the following on-going objectives:
- Continuous open dialogue and update with the community and appropriate stakeholders.
  - Faithful testimony of the City and the Council's successes.



ABOVE FIG. 3-1: Examples of city communication and promotion graphics from elsewhere

- Increased coordination of marketing efforts within the Council to ensure accurate promotion of successes and assets.
- Strategic alignment with key stakeholders to ensure full collaboration of people and assets toward a common goal. This includes strategic, pre-emptive communication in order to coordinate marketing objectives across stakeholder groups and sectors.

Criteria that should be used to measure success should be:

- Tangible change in local residents' 'self esteem' about the city.
- Specific residential population growth numbers.
- Specific visitor growth numbers.
- Specific numbers of new businesses opening in Invercargill.
- Measurable changes in how the country and the wider region perceives Invercargill and its centre.

#### WHO IS INVOLVED

A holistic approach to reputation change encompasses more than presentation. It is also about culture change and ongoing action. Therefore the programme, whilst initiated by the Council, must be owned by the entire community. This way, the messages about Invercargill that different people communicate are telling the same consistent story, backed up by positively congruent experiences.

To do so, a strategic and targeted marketing and promotion programme is proposed, focussing on:

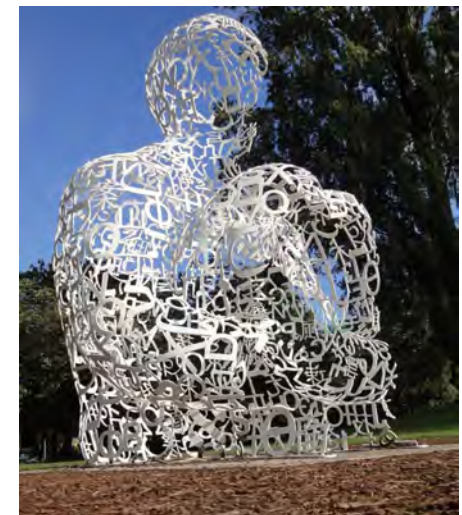
- Existing businesses and residents: consider them as the richest source of Invercargill's ambassadors and promoters.
- New residents: attract new residents and enhance local public buy-in, support and an awareness of a positive Invercargill image.
- New businesses: get Invercargill on the radar and attract more business via targeted sustainable economic development, also refer to **Priority C**.
- Government departments / key stakeholders: gain regional recognition as a serious player.

- Visitors: increase quality visitor attractions as a means to increase the vibrancy of the city centre. Also consider every visitor as a potential future resident or business founder.

#### THE STEPS TO GET THERE

The development of a marketing strategy for the city centre should be undertaken by an external marketing specialist. This work would cover at least the following elements:

- Alignment with, and development from the Southland Economic Profile and other associated work carried out by Venture Southland.
- Identification of the variety of attractions and opportunities that the city centre offers. This work has largely been carried out by De Beer Marketing and Communications (July 2003), Vibrant Invercargill (Visitor Survey, December 2007) and Capital Development Agency (CDA) Ltd (reported by Blumsky and Kirton, June 2010). CDA concluded that Invercargill's most authentic 'point of difference' (and one which was supported by the great majority of people consulted) is that Invercargill is seen as child or family friendly and a great place to bring up children. Whilst this work should build upon those findings, a greater focus is needed on the city centre and its assets. This should be done with the input from the local community. The local community is not only a rich source of information, involving them will also start developing the right mindset which is the first step of empowering the community to communicate the message.
- Identification of the best ways to communicate the above. What are the key promotional messages about the city's and the centre's current assets and how could these be promoted more strategically?
- Outline of the requirements for a staged roll-out of a promotions campaign.
- Identification of target audiences and how to respond strategically to appropriately connect with them.
- Development of a consistently articulated city brand, upheld by a strong visual identity, visible in the public realm.



ABOVE FIG. 3-2: Examples of elements within the public realm that tell the story of the place

Together with the roll-out of this campaign, the Council must undertake the following:

- Continuous and regular communication of Invercargill's success stories and the Council's upcoming projects with residents and the wider region.
- Strategic alignment with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure that all staff, programmes and resources work collaboratively towards the same goal. This includes providing key business and community sectors with upcoming messages, so that they can also market a similar message.
- Increasing marketing coordination within the Council to ensure the successes and assets of the city are accurately promoted as much as possible.

### EVENTS

Events offer an opportunity for Invercargill to showcase the city to its residents and visitors. Events provide opportunities to learn, celebrate, participate and interact - collectively building local pride, identity and sense of community.

The economic benefit of events is a valuable component to the Council's operations. Events that are either specialist in nature or of a regional / national significance can attract visitors to the city, bringing with them demand for accommodation, hospitality and activities. The staging of events must carefully consider their location, in order to maximise positive spin-offs to the city.

Providing space, facilities and opportunity for events to be held, and then marketing them to the wider community, is an important function of the Council. The Council's role is also relevant when events require temporary closure of streets.

Consultation identified that Wachner Place, arguably the main open space in the city centre, is not used frequently for events. Whilst proposals under **Priority G** in this Action Plan are aimed at improving the attractiveness and accessibility of Wachner Place, greater emphasis will be placed on various parts of Esk Street as open air venues for various events.

Invercargill's events calendar was not analysed as part of this project. However, the following general issues should be considered as parts of an events strategy:

- Where possible, events should focus on the city centre and the economic wellbeing of its businesses.
- Events should support businesses and not compete with them. Consultation with local retailers is required. On the one hand, more activity and vibrancy loss may positively impact on local businesses, but on the other hand negative impacts, e.g. on access to businesses should be carefully considered.
- Events should be designed with the venue in mind.
- Open spaces should be designed with possible events in mind.
- The location and capacity of public toilets should be considered.
- The impact on the road network resulting from large pedestrian flows should be considered as well as pedestrian safety, especially for children
- The capacity of public parking in the vicinity of events venues should be assessed.
- The safety of the venue relative to hazardous goods or fireworks should be confirmed.

ROLES DURING IMPLEMENTATION	
Agency/ party	Role
Invercargill City Council	Leadership and continuity
Venture Southland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Sounding board for the Council during the promotion strategy process</li> <li>→ Active promotional role following finalisation of the strategy</li> </ul>
General community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Input into the promotion strategy process</li> <li>→ Passive promotional role following finalisation of the strategy</li> </ul>



Priority:  
**B**

# City centre focus in Council policies and actions

**RELATES MOST STRONGLY TO:**

**LTCCP COMMUNITY OUTCOME**  
**5. Strong effective leadership taking us into the future**

**SPATIAL PLAN (DRAFT) OBJECTIVES**  
**1. The city centre is a place with iconic buildings and institutions**  
**2. The city centre is where people gather**  
**3. The city centre is acknowledged as the primary centre for retailing, business, culture and entertainment**  
**4. The city centre accommodates economically viably strengthened buildings to address earthquake risks**  
**5. The city centre accommodates uses that are relevant to the community**  
**9. The city centre is protected against erosion of its critical mass**  
**11. Residential development is encouraged in the city centre**

**OBJECTIVE**  
 The objective under Priority B is to include 'City Centre Prominence' as a key criterion in Council policies and decision making. This will reinforce the importance of the city centre for Invercargill and at the same time help make it attractive for businesses to remain or locate in the city centre.

**CONTEXT**  
 The Council's leadership is needed to help investors make fundamental development decisions. In this section considerations are presented under two headings:  
 1. Council policies; and  
 2. Council actions and decisions.

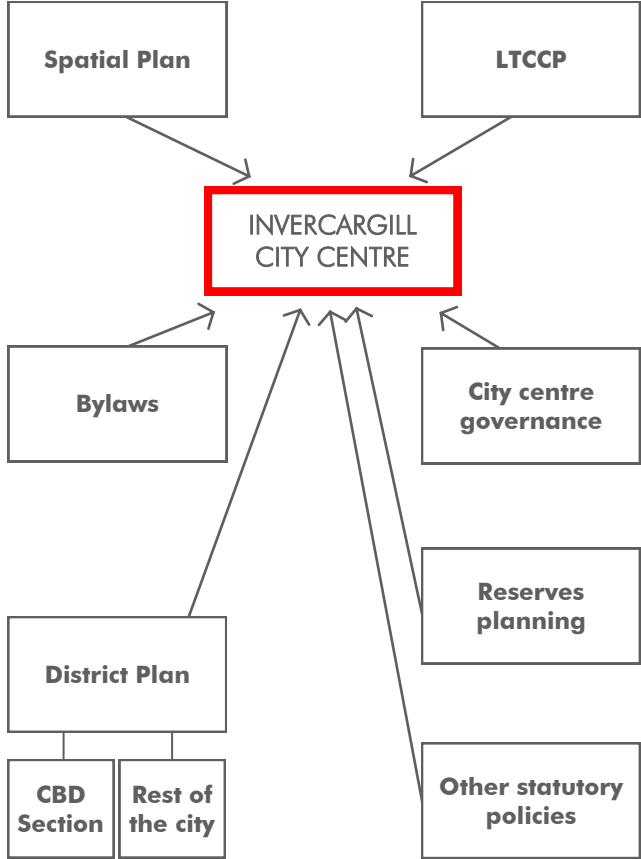
**1. Council policies**

Currently there is a lack of focus on the primacy of the city centre, especially in the District Plan. However it is needed to focus on the wider statutory framework. Considerations relating to the following policy mechanisms and areas of Council influence are presented:

- The Spatial Plan;
- The District Plan –CBD section;
- The District Plan –rest of the city;
- The Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP);
- City centre governance;
- Reserves Planning;
- Other statutory policies; and
- Bylaws.

**SPATIAL PLAN**  
 The Council is currently working on *The Big Picture*, its non-statutory spatial plan. This is intended to be a living document that is kept up to date, reflecting the Council's current thinking about the spatial implications of its policymaking. As part of this process the following issues related to the city centre should be considered:

- The role of **the area inside the Town Belt but outside the 'triangle'** defining the city centre should be considered and developed. It could be that in this



ABOVE FIG. 3-3: Policies influencing the wellbeing of the city centre

area mixed-use (both vertically and horizontally) should be encouraged.

- The role of the **suburban service / community nodes** (Waikivi, Windsor, Glengarry, South City) and how these complement the city centre should be considered and articulated.

### DISTRICT PLAN – CBD SECTION

The current District Plan Review offers a window of opportunity to consider the following issues that relate to the city centre:

- The **'triangle' defining the city centre should be articulated** in a Policy framework to reinforce the meaning of the 'area of focus'.
- The present District Plan requirements pertaining to the city centre area of focus is deficient with regard to **urban design outcomes** desired. It should be considered that the District Plan expresses the following issues:
  - Height;
  - Bulk and location;
  - Active edges;
  - Built character;
  - Microclimate effects, including the requirement for verandas;
  - CPTED outcomes;
  - Lighting and signage;
  - Location of service and storage areas.

This should be done without creating an off-putting or unnecessary complicated regulatory environment. It could also be that these issues are addressed by means of non-statutory **urban design guidelines**.

- Consideration should be given to allowing occasional **small front setbacks** in order to create 'footpath widenings', i.e. public open spaces.
- The possibility of **'zones within zones'** should be considered. An example of how this may be beneficial is having a 'Large Format Retail' sub-zone or precinct with a minimum footprint requirement, which will encourage fine-grain / boutique shops in other precincts.
- Rules around **city centre living** and the associated amenity outcomes should be carefully considered. The

challenge is to encourage city centre living (for the well-known advantages including vibrancy, security, travel savings etc.) and at the same time address issues such as reverse sensitivity related to surrounding businesses and negative amenity outcomes that harmfully taint the image of city centre living. The necessity and nature of requirements such as noise limits, outdoor living space, car parking etc. should be considered.

- Currently there is **no requirement for parking provision** in the area defined in the Operative District Plan as the *'City Centre Heritage Precinct'* (the area bounded by Tay, Dee, mid-block between Don and Spey, mid-block between Kelvin and Deveron). The policy stance was that the Council would provide the car parking. As it is arguable whether it has, this whole regime needs re-thinking.
- **Parking requirements** need to be considered, also in relation to possible strategies that encourage people to use different methods of transportation. Examples to consider include:
  - No or a lower car parking requirement if an annual contribution is paid for public transport; and
  - No or a lower car parking requirement if bike storage is provided.
- As part of the current District Plan Review the identification of a series of **precincts** within the city centre is taking place. These could be expressed and interpreted in an Objective and Policy framework and backed up with methods. These would be mainly non-regulatory, but there may be some rules around the entertainment precinct and hours of operation etc. The purpose of all this is to inform decision-making by the private sector, e.g. for investment or location of a business.
- There is a need to consider objectives, policies, rules and non-regulatory methods in relation to **heritage buildings**. The priorities in this respect should be articulated in the District Plan. Would it be possible to build in some kind of policy framework that makes it easier for people wanting to do something constructive with a heritage building, even if it is to retain the façade and build a tilt slab in behind?

- Consideration should be given to the protection of important **vistas**.
- There is a need to think about what is needed in terms of **signage** rules and protocols. It should be considered whether there a common signage theme (directional as well as advertising) can contribute to the identity, character, and functionality of the city centre.
- Consideration should be given whether the District Plan should address **mobility scooter parking**. The same applies to **campervan parking**.

### DISTRICT PLAN – REST OF THE CITY

- The city centre zone needs to be given primacy as the preferred location for **retail and professional offices**. An overall tightening of the rules to encourage retail and professional services to the city centre and to the suburban shopping and business centres identified in the Council's Spatial Plan. **The Big Picture**, should be considered.
- An assessment is needed of the potential for a shopping mall to seek a location in the **industrial zones** outside of the city centre. It may be that the district plan needs to include specific provisions to both protect the city centre from the effects of large retail areas outside it and also to protect scarce industrial land as a valuable resource to attract industries.
- The current **home occupation** rules may be too tolerant and may also need tightening up. Consideration should be given to leaving these rules the same or even loosening these for the area within the town belt, including the area outside the triangular area of focus to encourage home occupation in those areas.
- The **Suburban shopping and business centres** need some good clear definition, policy, methods and outcomes thought through, especially their position relative to the city centre should be considered.
- A clear distinction is needed between **'specialist retail'**, e.g. boat shops and car sale yards, and the retail activities desired for the city centre.

## LTCCP ISSUES

- The District Plan and the LTCCP are both silent on **development / financial contributions**. They are not charged currently because it was thought they may discourage development. However it has been suggested that this may change so that the cost of requirements for service extensions could be attributed to those benefiting from them. The following questions should be considered: Could or should development or financial contributions, or some form of targeted rate be imposed in the city centre:
  - As part of a Business Improvement District (BID) strategy?
  - Instead of requirements to provide parking spaces (in order to fund Council parking)?
  - For public space upgrades?
  - To provide a fund to assist with heritage conservation?
  - Or imposed elsewhere so that the absence of development or financial contributions is an incentive to locate in the CBD?
- The legality and propriety of channelling **public funds into privately owned heritage buildings** for the purpose of heritage conservation needs to be considered.
- Are current **rubbish and sanitary** arrangements what businesses want? Would they be better handled under a BID-type umbrella?
- Is safety and security enhancement seen as a reason to support increased spending on **public space lighting**?
- Currently the **Parking Enforcement** section is operated with zero rates input. Another model should be considered in which the parking enforcement officers are seen as city centre hosts and guides whose job it is to make the clients' visits more enjoyable and also to make the CBD function smoothly (which might include parking enforcement).

## GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- It should be considered whether the right **governance structure** is in place with respect to the CBD. There is no retailers' association in Invercargill. "Vibrant Invercargill" was set up some years ago on the Mainstreet model to fill this role. Their membership consists of CBD property owners. It has limited funding from the Council and attracts limited active membership from the business sector. The ICC Inner City Working Group is a standing committee of the Council. This has very limited delegated authority to spend (mainly on planning matters), but as an appointed committee is not fully representative of the Central City Communities. The **BID model** is worth considering as a replacement for the two existing bodies. The BID model is increasingly being adopted both nationally and internationally as a form of public / private partnership. It operates within a defined area of a city. It is based on the premise that place-based problems and issues demand place-based responses. It brings together public, private and civic parties to address necessary revitalisation, economic development, and quality of life improvements within the designated area. Programmes are funded through a BID targeted rate within the defined BID area.
- A **protocol whereby 'CBD relevance'** is a standard criterion in Council policy-making should be considered.
- Whether **hours of operation** for city centre businesses is a governance or a management issue is open for debate. However there is a role for the Council (or perhaps a future BID) to set guidelines that would cover both the daytime and the night-time economies.

## RESERVES PLANNING

- Consideration should be given to the question whether current and future small **'pocket parks'** should be 'consecrated' reserves under the Reserves Act. A related issues is whether this could be one short-term way of managing sites created by building demolition.

- There is a need for some kind of **'open space strategy'** for the city centre that sets out what we are trying to achieve in the public space and that could form the basis for any District Plan or regulatory initiatives. The strategy needs to consider the range of users, including small children, youth and the elderly.
- Related to **Priority A**, there is also a need for an **events strategy** to encourage events which can be held in the city centre to be held there. Again this is something a BID might develop. As mentioned earlier, Esk Street between Dee and Kelvin Streets might (with some open space adjustments) have potential to function as a venue for e.g. bands, street parties, civic events, events like the buskers festival, sporting events (e.g. beach volleyball or criterium cycling), or other unique Southland or Invercargill events.

## OTHER STATUTORY POLICIES

- A considerable **uncertainty and apprehension** in the business sector can be observed about the stance the Council is going to take in relation to buildings that do not meet current earthquake code requirements. Clarification by the Council of the regulatory approach it intends to take is needed.
- **Liquor licensing** should be integrated into the overall city centre Strategy. At one stage Invercargill had 24 hour licensing. In response to initiatives, led mainly by the Police, closing hours were reduced to 3.00 a.m. with positive effects on reported crime rates. The general feel is that the community is happy with this move. The late night economy and city centre vibrancy would perhaps be stimulated by a greater choice of venues appealing to a wider range of age groups.

## BYLAWS

- Invercargill has a range of **bylaws that should be integrated** with the Central City Strategy. Prohibition of skateboarders and people with dogs should be reconsidered, especially in a city that calls itself family- and youth-friendly. Is the current regime right in relation to cafes on the sidewalk?



## 2. Council actions and decisions

Important development decisions that the Council takes or can heavily influence should also include considerations pertaining to the wellbeing of the city centre. An example of this includes the location of the Visitor Information Centre. The current centre is connected to the Southland Museum and Art Gallery, and there are plans to expand the museum. The library, located in the city centre, responds quite frequently to visitor enquiries, as does the Vibrant Invercargill office in Don Street. The need to consider the location of the Visitor Information Centre (as well as the Southland Museum and Art Gallery) came up frequently during consultation.

A debate should be held about the best location for the information centre. Criteria to consider include at least the list below. Crucial is the weighting given to the different criteria.

- Ease of finding the centre by following signage.
- Ease of access by private vehicle.
- Ease of access and visibility for pedestrians.
- Visibility from passing traffic.
- Ease of parking including for campervans, availability of free parking.
- Availability and ease of coach parking.
- Ability to generate passing pedestrian retail trade.
- Centrality within the city centre / proximity to the retail heart.
- Proximity to other community facilities.
- Space for events or visitors to loiter without disrupting other activities.
- Proximity to magnet visitor attractions.
- Security outside business hours.
- Possibility of shared facilities with other public facilities.
- Space for expansion.

ROLES DURING IMPLEMENTATION	
Agency/ party	Role
Invercargill City Council	Leadership and continuity: → District Plan Review → Spatial Plan on-going review → Review of other policies and plans Business Improvement District (BID) -consider and consult on possible option for Invercargill
Key stakeholders	Affected party to be consulted
General community	Affected party to be consulted
Venture Southland	Consultative partner for the possible relocation of the visitor information centre

Priority:

C

## Business development and attraction

Several possible reasons can be identified:

- There may be no (or not sufficient) secure parking available for long term lease nearby.
- The parking requirements for commercial development may be too restrictive relative to land values.
- Other District Plan requirements may be too restrictive relative to land values.
- The existing heritage building stock and associated strengthening requirements may pose too many constraints.
- There is a perceived lack of vibrancy in the city centre in terms of its attractions and facilities, the presence of customers, other businesses and the quality of the public realm.
- The subdivision pattern, and in particular the small, narrow lots in often multiple ownerships, can make it difficult to put together a viable proposal for redevelopment for a larger project in the city centre.

The crucial question that should be considered is whether and to what extent the above has an overall negative effect for the city centre. The shift of the point of gravity for offices to roughly the vicinity of the intersection of Don and Deveron Streets is not perceived as a very worrying trend. Businesses can still contribute to the commercial facilities in the city centre core and its vibrancy. The problem is perhaps the missed chance to re-use heritage buildings.

A more worrying trend would be if major office and commercial developments took place in areas beyond the green belt.

### PROPOSALS

In response to this issue the following is needed:

#### Business Survey

This should be an actual survey, as opposed to second hand information based on consultation. It should identify the following:

- Whether or not businesses are moving away from the city centre.

### RELATES MOST STRONGLY TO:

#### LTCCP COMMUNITY OUTCOME

**2. A diverse economy built from our strengths for growth and prosperity**

#### SPATIAL PLAN (DRAFT) OBJECTIVES

**2. The city centre is where people gather**

**3. The city centre is acknowledged as the primary centre for retailing, business, culture and entertainment**

**4. The city centre accommodates economically viably strengthened buildings to address earthquake risks**

**7. The city centre is defined with entrances and gateways and has clearly recognisable precincts**

**9. The city centre is protected against erosion of its critical mass**

### OBJECTIVE

The objective under this priority is to promote the city centre as the key place to do business by influencing decision makers to appreciate the advantages of city centre locations. It is also about identifying measures to make the city centre attractive as a location.

### CONTEXT

The following local, national and global trends may have profound influences on the wellbeing of the city centre:

#### Positive influence

- The increasing desire for authentic experiences and social opportunities that public places in city centres

can provide. A gradual rediscovery of centres and greater planning and design emphasis on these can be observed in Australia and New Zealand. This comes from a growing understanding that city centres are the heart and soul of the community, are the best mechanism to bring the community together and facilitate social, cultural and economic exchange.

- Rise in popularity of city centre living among the younger segment of the population as well as baby-boomers.
- A general increase in smaller office-based businesses, as opposed to space hungry, low-intensity industrial.
- The Southland economy is perceived as relatively strong.

#### Negative influence

- A strong increase in on-line shopping.
- Low population growth in Invercargill.
- The Global Financial Crisis.
- An ageing population.
- Demand for affordable housing.

### ISSUE

It is in the light of the above that anecdotal evidence from consultation with representatives from the Invercargill Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders points towards recent trends of businesses leaving what is defined as the triangular city centre core. It was reported that in recent times medium-sized businesses have developed buildings in areas north of Don Street and east of Deveron Street, and some have even converted residential properties near or beyond the green belt.

- If this trend is observed, where businesses are moving to and the reasons behind this.
- What the actual and perceived barriers are that make it hard for businesses to establish or remain within the city centre.
- Identification of measures that may help alleviate barriers. This should feed into the District Plan Review (refer to **Priority B** in this report).

### Promotion and Attraction Strategy

Under **Priority A** a promotion strategy aimed at promoting opportunities and assets in Invercargill, and changing perceptions about Invercargill and its city centre is proposed. This would build on the economic profiling and associated work already carried out by Venture Southland. As alluded to, a business attraction strategy should form part of this or at least relate to this. An output of this strategy could be a Business Prospectus, marketing the Invercargill city centre.

#### *Who to target*

The Council is currently marketing Invercargill's opportunities for development through its industrial land resource in the Awarua Industrial Sub-Area. In addition to this (and possibly more relevant to the city centre) the target audience should be widened to attracting smaller service-oriented, office-based businesses. Particular focus should be on businesses in economic growth sectors.

Small to medium size businesses employ over 50% of New Zealanders and make up over 99% of all businesses. For this reason attracting, and retaining, small businesses to Invercargill offers significant economic potential. Several opportunities exist for the city to ensure it is attractive to small businesses which can choose to locate wherever they like. This ranges from provision of premises, connections into the wider business community and confidence in the facilities and experience the city offers.

#### *Further study needed*

- Research is needed to analyse population and business growth statistics. This should focus on the

detailed economic prospects of individual employment sectors and should focus on the Invercargill and Southland situation, compared to the South Island and the New Zealand-wide figures.

- From this proper research basis the specific target audience should be identified, along with the detailed contents of the Business Attraction Strategy. Without the understanding of the growth trends, it is impossible to market the opportunities, assets and business settings available.

### Business Precincts

The Council should clearly communicate its vision for employment throughout the city, illustrating opportunities for small business clusters within the city centre. By developing a vision for specific locations, the Council can communicate the advantages of each location to small businesses considering locating in Invercargill. Presenting such a vision will illustrate that opportunities exist beyond the present offer.

To enable the vision to bear fruit, planning will be required to ensure development types (land uses) and qualities important to such businesses can be achieved. Doing so would include:

- Clear Statements of Intent for each location / precinct.
- Ensuring the activities of neighbouring sites (land uses) are compatible.
- Performance based planning provisions (specifying maximum 'on-site' and 'off-site' impacts).
- Provision of facilities and amenities required (e.g. landscaping, street furniture).
- Provision for broadband.
- Development and business environment controls e.g. building location and quality amenities.

#### *Further study needed*

- Detailed analysis of Invercargill's situation is required to identify possible business precincts. This could include precincts from a visitor experience perspective. Based on ideas in other New Zealand cities, it appears that the following precincts could potentially be identified:

- Banking and legal;
- Civic;
- Engineering;
- Night time businesses;
- Arts and creative;
- Boutique shopping.
- The Southern Institute of Technology identified the need for a business incubator. Further advice on this idea based on economic analysis is needed.

### Opportunity prospectus

In other cities, the proposal to develop an 'opportunity prospectus' is considered in conjunction with the promotion campaign. This prospectus could provide information to the potential businesses and residents the city wishes to target. It would promote activities, attractions and facilities of relevance to each sector.

A possible prospectus could contain information on:

- The location of Invercargill in the region and the regional state highway road network. This could also contain info-graphics on distances / travel times to other centres, the airport, the Stewart Island ferry, and other business and industrial facilities.
- Invercargill's ability to attract and retain executives, experienced employees and those with scarce skills who can live or work wherever they choose. This is highly relevant if a business or government agency is considering an Invercargill location.
- Images and descriptions of Invercargill's unique attributes. This would include the high quality Invercargill and Southland outdoor environment, its residential areas, and sporting and recreational facilities.
- Detail on existing business specialisations and the vision for the city centre and new business and industrial areas.
- Contact details of representatives of key family living and lifestyle attractions e.g. private schools, golf clubs, fitness, health and medical centres, service clubs, religious and service organisations, health and beauty services, recreational and special interest clubs.

ROLES DURING IMPLEMENTATION	
Agency/ party	Role
Invercargill City Council	<p>Leadership and continuity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Identification of business precincts</li> <li>→ Statistical analysis of economic growth opportunities</li> <li>→ Formation of a Business Attraction Strategy</li> <li>→ District Plan Review in response to barriers identified by Business Survey</li> </ul>
Chamber of Commerce	Business Survey among the business community into trends and barriers
Venture Southland	Ongoing business promotion within the Southland region
Vibrant Invercargill / Inner City Working Group or BID	Ongoing local business support, service provision and promotion

Priority:

D

## Heritage protection and enhancement

- The maintenance costs of heritage buildings are too great.
- Disabled access is too difficult to facilitate.
- The construction and the interior pose limitations on the use.
- There is limited money available to invest.
- There is not enough demand for buying or leasing space in heritage buildings.
- Property owners have voiced concerns about insurance, both the ability to obtain it and the cost of doing so. One reported an increase from \$43,000 to \$119,999 in premium plus a large excess. Some buildings have been valued for rating purposes at land price less demolition cost.
- The existing subdivision pattern may make any sort of comprehensive redevelopment difficult. The small, comparatively narrow lots often in diverse ownership can make it difficult for developers to assemble sites of the appropriate size and orientation for development projects.
- Proposed changes to the Building Code, and the nature of any changes the ICC may make to its Earthquake Prone Building Policy. The latter is planned for formal review in 2012.

### EARTHQUAKE STRENGTHENING

There are no known seismic faults under the city. Southland and Northland are New Zealand's two 'safer' regions. Nevertheless a policy of stricter enforcement of the national earthquake safety standards by the Council is pending. An opinion voiced by stakeholders is that the position of the Council on earthquake-prone buildings is an unknown factor, not helping the feasibility of restoration.

### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

In response to the above issues the following initiatives are proposed:

#### Prioritisation

Because the commercial reality is that not every building can be restored, a prioritisation is needed. Figure 3-4 outlines the process to come to a well-considered

### RELATES MOST STRONGLY TO:

#### LTCCP COMMUNITY OUTCOME

- 1. Southland is a great place to live**
- 5. Strong effective leadership taking us into the future**

#### SPATIAL PLAN (DRAFT) OBJECTIVES

- 1. The city centre is a place with iconic buildings and institutions**
- 4. The city centre accommodates economically viably strengthened buildings to address earthquake risks**
- 7. The city centre is defined with entrances and gateways and has clearly recognisable precincts**
- 8. The city centre respects and celebrates our heritage**
- 11. Residential development is encouraged in the city centre**

### OBJECTIVE

Invercargill's heritage buildings are a valuable resource for the city and play an important part in defining the city's character. The objective under this priority is to protect and celebrate the key aspects and elements of this built resource in order to retain the character of the Invercargill City Centre. For this to happen it is important to raise awareness of the value of heritage, to identify possible solutions to the development economics challenge and prioritise the heritage response so that funds are used effectively.

### CONTEXT

Invercargill can be seen as a heritage precinct within the context of New Zealand. The city accommodates a valuable heritage resource of which much is visible in the street frontages in the city centre. A report prepared by John Gray, Registered and Heritage Architect, *Invercargill City Centre Design Guidelines*, August 1998, presents a comprehensive analysis of the local heritage context. It should be noted that heritage buildings are not only interesting from a cultural-historic point of view, it also forms an asset with a commercial value. In a world where commercial environments increasingly look similar, the popularity of experiencing authentic and unique places is evident. This applies to both visitors and locals. There is also a hunger across the country to unearth and celebrate the history of a place. This applies to both Maori culture as well as colonial heritage. This process can be used as a way to build social capital.

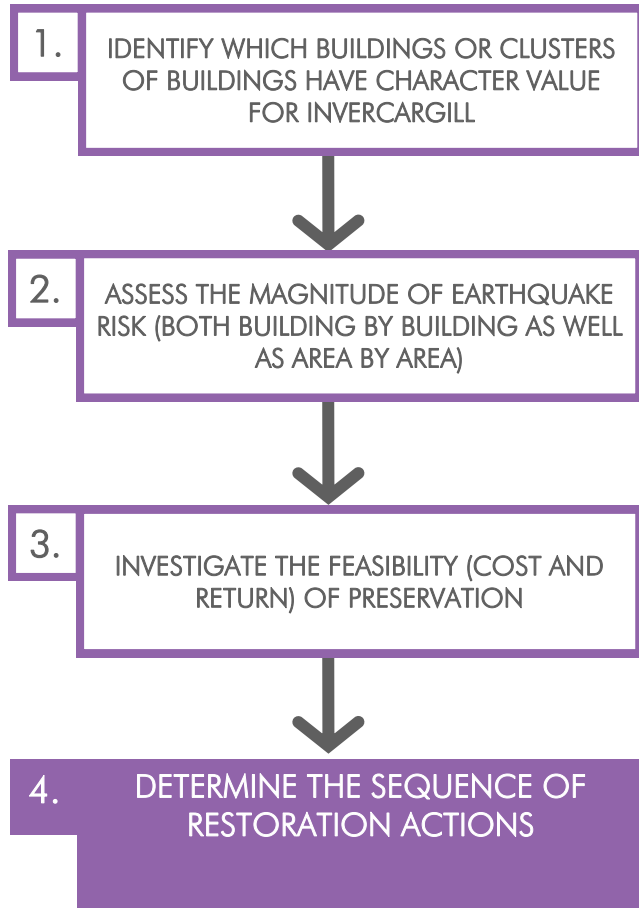
### ISSUES

A large number of buildings have heritage value but are empty (especially in the upper stories) and underutilised. Many buildings are poorly maintained and in a state of advanced decay. Since the best way to maintain heritage buildings is to re-use them for a different purpose to what they were intended for, it is important to understand what the barriers to a commercially viable re-use are.

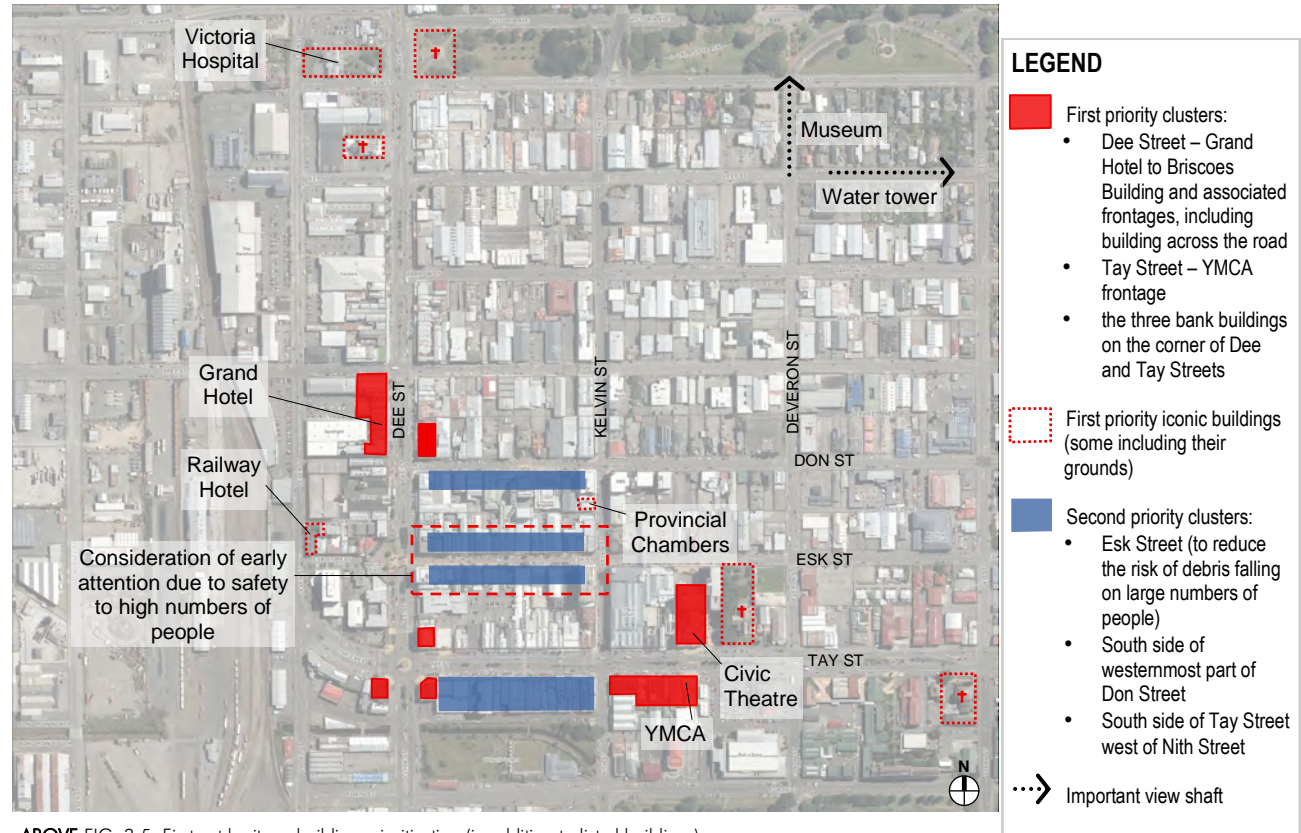
Consultation has identified at least the following (perceived) barriers:

- Earthquake strengthening requirements necessitate restoration work that is too costly.
- Fire proofing requirements necessitate restoration work that is too costly.





ABOVE FIG. 3-4: The Heritage building prioritisation process



ABOVE FIG. 3-5: First cut heritage building prioritisation (in addition to listed buildings)

prioritisation. This ensures that buildings are not kept just for the sake of keeping.

A 'first cut', provisional example of identification where public resource may be directed to help preserve heritage buildings was produced during one of the working sessions and later refined. It is shown in Figure 3-5 and clearly focuses on the 'triangular' area of focus for the city centre. Even though this is just one stakeholder group's take on it, it could form the basis for a proper, more objective study considered by a wider group. A possible prioritisation should build on the study by John Gray that, as part of the last District Plan Review, identified essential

buildings from a heritage value point of view in addition to those formally listed by NZHPT.

- Other ideas that could inform a possible prioritisation is to:
- Focus on the strengthening of verandas (e.g. in busy pedestrian areas such as Esk Street) to give people refuge from falling building facades during an earthquake.
  - As a last resort, focus on retention and strengthening of historic facades only and integrate these into a new building behind it.

**Council policy and procedural improvements**

- The Council should play a greater role in situations where neighbouring buildings impact on each other because of shared walls.
- The Council is planning a formal review of its Earthquake Prone Building Policy in 2012. The outcome of this should be clearly communicated in order to give more certainty to the private sector.
- Heritage considerations including prioritisation should form part of the District Plan Review.
- The Council should consider a coordinated ‘one-stop-shop’ for consent processes involving heritage buildings. A possibility to consider should be to allow staged strengthening as part of a clear process.
- The Council should consider a policy to incentivise the improvement of architectural lighting on buildings to showcase and celebrate the city’s heritage buildings.
- Invercargill’s views could be emphasised. Figure 3-5 indicates two important views: up Leet Street to the Water Tower, and up Deveron Street to the Museum. Statutory protection of these and other should be considered.

**Advocacy and heritage focus in Council actions**

- The Council could consider adopting a policy that required it to at least consider using a city centre heritage building for any new or relocated function or enterprise in which it may be involved.
- Further and ongoing conversations with potential investors and funders of heritage restoration projects are needed. These could include, but are not limited to, NZHPT, ILT, CTS, Lotteries, Troopers Memorial Trust.
- The Council should consider its focus on heritage preservation in its funding and grants policies.
- The Council should consider which opportunities it has to better convey the rich and unique history of Invercargill as part of public space upgrades.

**Growing knowledge and expertise**

- A demonstration heritage restoration project should be considered. This project would serve not only to demonstrate the opportunities and outcomes, but also

serve as a valuable test case of financial, technical and procedural difficulties to be overcome in similar projects. Following this demonstration project the information on cost effective solutions should be supplied to the development community. The project should also inform a review of the Council’s procedures and policies (including the District Plan).

- The examples of successful structural upgrades to 66% of current code should be marketed and lessons learned from it should be published.
- There is a need for a survey to find out why the businesses that have moved out of heritage buildings in recent years have done so.
- The idea to host a Council-sponsored earthquake engineering conference should be considered. This would market Invercargill as a centre of heritage building and earthquake strengthening excellence, it would attract expertise, and logically apply it to Invercargill. This would obviously build on lessons learned from the earthquake in Christchurch and the subsequent advancement of expertise and techniques.
- Projects in other New Zealand cities identified that the split between land ownership and building ownership is a complicating factor relative to heritage restoration. This was not suggested during consultation, but it is worth investigating whether this forms a barrier.

ROLES DURING IMPLEMENTATION	
Agency/ party	Role
Invercargill City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Leading the prioritisation process</li> <li>→ Considering procedural and financial incentives for heritage protection and enhancement</li> <li>→ Advocacy and publicity</li> </ul>
Chamber of Commerce	Business Survey among businesses that recently moved out of heritage buildings
NZHPT	Affected party to be consulted
ILT	Possible partner for a demonstration project
Troopers Memorial Trust	Purchase and renovation of notable historic buildings
General community	Affected party to be consulted



Priority:

E

## Car parking

### RELATES MOST STRONGLY TO:

#### LTCCP COMMUNITY OUTCOME

**4. We are healthy people**

**6. A treasured environment which we care for and which supports us now and into the future**

#### SPATIAL PLAN (DRAFT) OBJECTIVES

**3. The city centre is acknowledged as the primary centre for retailing, business, culture and entertainment**

**7. The city centre is defined with entrances and gateways and has clearly recognisable precincts**

**10. The city centre has clear, user-friendly, logical and less ambiguous traffic circulation and parking**

#### OBJECTIVE

The objective is to provide an integrated response to parking which reconciles the needs of visitors, workers and future developments. Ultimately this would enable the Council to implement effective parking supply, payment and time restrictions management.

#### CONTEXT

A balanced car parking system is crucial for the wellbeing of the city centre.

- Businesses and shops should be accessible by car, especially for those with impaired mobility.
- Parked cars and areas of car parking should not detract from the pedestrian quality.
- People should be enticed to walk around the city centre, both by an attractive walking environment as

well as some pressure on vehicle movement and parking.

#### ISSUE

The main issue is whether this balance is more or less right in the Invercargill City Centre. The consultation and working sessions identified sufficient dissatisfaction with car parking to indicate that a holistic review is required. Car parking is widely perceived to be a problem. What is less clear is the nature of the problem, in terms of cause and effect. Contradictory messages about the parking situation in the city centre were received. On the one hand it was communicated that there are not enough car parks available or that there should be an increase in parking supply, others indicated that there is sufficient capacity available.

#### Messages advocating additional parking supply

- There is not enough parking available in order to retain businesses closer to city centre. It can be observed that businesses are moving out of the city centre, partly due to the lack of secure, all-day parking.
- There may be sufficient parking to serve the existing commercial facilities, however, in order to attract new development there should be additional supply.
- City centre retail is suffering from the competition by retailers located on the periphery of the city centre where generous car parking is available.
- Over recent years increased time restrictions on city centre parking have tended to push longer term parkers out of the city centre into residential areas. Residents (within or just outside the green belt)

feel they suffer from this parking overflow. Elderly have complained that parked cars hinder visiting service providers.

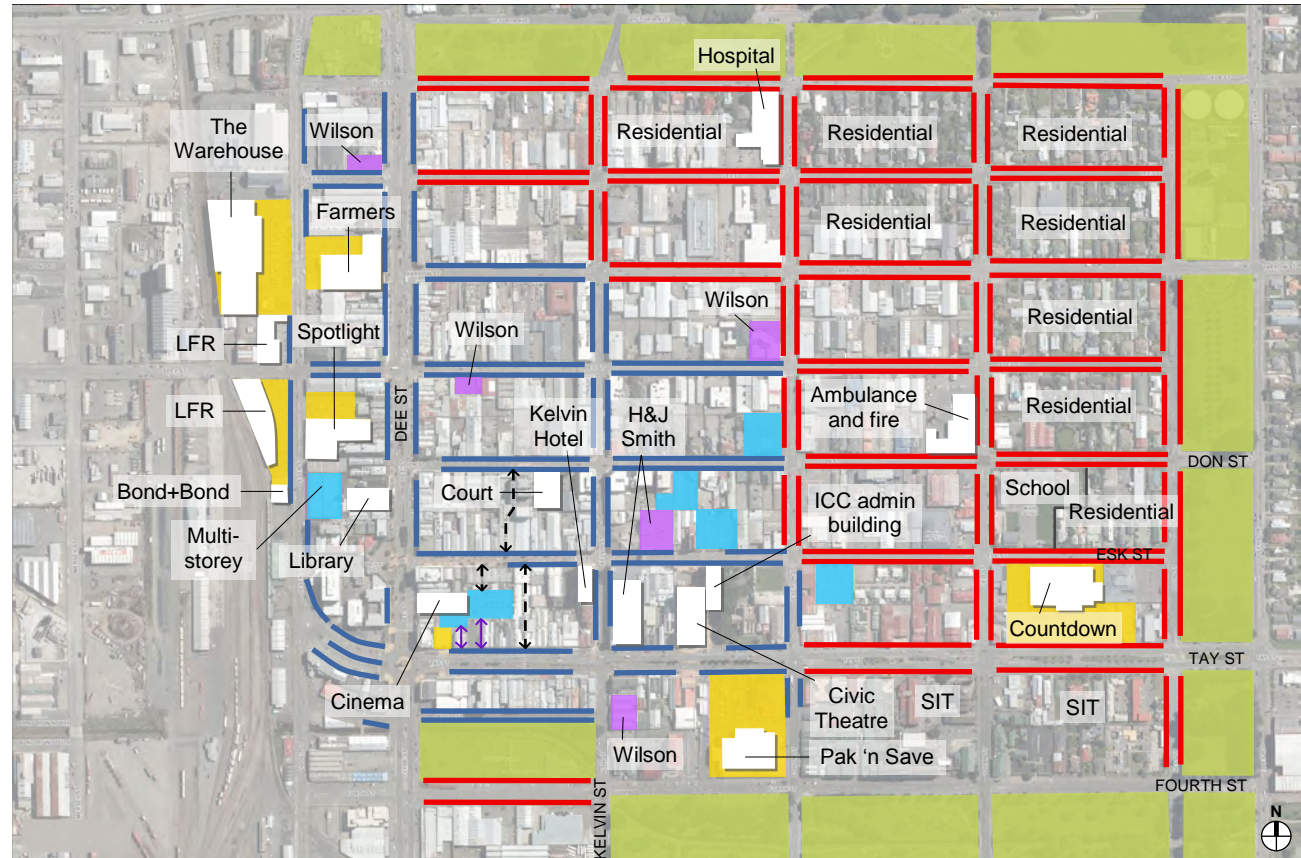
#### Messages indicating that there is sufficient parking supply

- The issue is an unrealistic expectation that there should always be parking available right in front of shops and businesses. It comes down to good urban design. If walking through the city centre is safe and interesting, and moderately sheltered much of the way, people will be prepared to walk further to and from somewhat peripheral car parking areas.
- There is an unrealistic expectation that city centre parking should be free. People are not prepared to pay for parking.
- There is a conflict between parking for city centre workers and shopkeepers (all-day), and shoppers (short term).
- There is sufficient city centre car parking available. There is however a lack of good signage to it, especially for visitors.
- A little pressure on the parking system is acceptable. Metered and time restricted parking keeps parking spaces working efficiently.

A spatial analysis of the city centre dynamics and current parking regime is presented on the following pages. The basis for this analysis is formed by observations and consultation.

## Car parking analysis

- Figure 3-6 illustrates a spatial analysis of the current car parking situation. The following points should be noted:
- On-street parking in the area roughly coinciding with the triangle of focus is regulated by means of metered parking with varying time-restrictions.
  - The streets in the area outside the triangle, but within the green belt accommodate time-restricted parking. An exception to this is the eastern part of Forth Street.
  - ICC operates various paid car parks, of which one (Leven Street) is a multi-storey and the others are surface car parks.
  - Various private parties operate paid car parks. Most notable is that Wilson leases several vacant sites often on a short term lease and operates these as paid car parks. H&J Smiths operates a multi-story car park in Esk Street, connected to their store.
  - Several large car parks associated with supermarkets or Large Format Retail (LFR) stores are located on the periphery of the city centre. Second hand accounts suggest that many use these free car parks while visiting the city centre for shopping, work or study at SIT.
  - Many SIT students rely on the unrestricted part of Fourth Street for all-day parking.



ABOVE FIG. 3-6: Parking analysis



## Existing Parking studies

Three relatively recent parking studies are available:

- Gabites Porter Consultants (1995).
- Traffic Design Group (2005).
- Opus International Consultants (reported 2011, survey carried out in November 2010).

### THE OPUS 2011 PARKING STUDY

The most recent study by Opus states the following conclusions that are relevant for the purpose of this report:

- The same methodology was used as the 2001 and 1995 surveys, so the survey produces a result that can be compared to the results of the previous two studies. However, it is hard to arrive at conclusions based on a survey over only two days.
- The theoretical demand per block was calculated based on demand rates generated by the different development types (land uses). This was compared to the supply of both on- and off-street car parking in and around the same block. This method identified deficits in the two blocks between Dee, Don, Kelvin and Tay Streets and in the block between Kelvin, Esk, Deveron and Tay Streets. Larger surpluses were calculated for the block between Dee, Spey, Kelvin and Don Streets and for the two blocks between Kelvin, Spey, Deveron and Esk Streets (refer to Figure 3-7).
- An increase in occupancy could be noted in the newly developed retail areas along Leven Street and surrounding areas due to increase in retail activity.
- The SIT was found to create a high level of actual on-street parking demand, due to the lack of restrictions on Forth Street.
- There was a marked decrease in occupancy of the paid car parks in the core city centre area when the survey was carried out. This may be due to the preference for free car parks and avoidance of car parks in the city centre.
- There has been a shift away from the CBD as the occupancy of the unrestricted parking in the fringes of the CBD has increased.

### FURTHER STUDY REQUIRED

The Opus study itself states that the survey does not have enough information to analyse the occupancy rates of on-street parking during various times of the day in order to assess possible additional parking needs. The following additional information is needed:

- The study should distinguish between the availability of all-day parking for workers and casual parking for customers as well as between the demand for all-day parking and customer car parks.
- Multiple data sets should be compared and collected over various times of the year, week and day.
- The Opus report suggests undertaking “detailed surveys of on-street car parks using number plate methods or using GPS handheld devices to get an actual representation of parking demands within the CBD during peak and off-peak hours. The results of this detailed survey will give better information to manage the supply and demand within the CBD”.
- The recommended study should integrate updated data on the situation around Wilson parking, which according to Council staff, has changed and is still changing significantly.

### OPTIONS

It should be noted that even if these more detailed investigations also identify a deficit for the three south-westernmost blocks of the core CBD (immediately northeast of ‘Banks Corner’, the Council should take a position on whether this deficit can indeed be offset by supply just outside these blocks, as the Opus study suggests.

Pending the outcomes of a detailed parking study, the following pages present a number of options for additional car parking supply.



ABOVE FIG. 3-7: Parking deficits and surpluses in the six CBD blocks according to the Opus 2010 parking study



## Car parking options

If a car parking need is established through the proposed parking study, the following options should be considered (refer to Figure 3-8 for the numbers):

### ICC / PUBLIC OFF-STREET CAR PARKING

1. The Leven Street carpark could be redeveloped with one or more additional decks to increase its capacity. One deck would accommodate approximately 75 car parks. Redevelopment of the building might also reduce the ongoing high maintenance costs. The following issues should be considered:
  - A new vehicle entrance off Dee Street (in the vicinity of the library) could increase its accessibility and therefore use.
  - Longer opening hours (perhaps 24 x 7) would support the nightlife activities in the informal nightlife cluster (refer to Figure 4-1).
  - Associated with the above, longer opening hours for the library atrium giving pedestrian access would be needed.
2. The 'Central Tay' car park is located in the centre of the city centre shopping area and right behind the cinema. It is currently privately owned and partly leased out to surrounding businesses and partly leased to the Council and open to the public. Additional capacity could be created by adding one or more decks. If a car parking building is created on the site, the ground floor could accommodate approximately 90 car parks and each deck could accommodate 60 car parks. A direct pedestrian connection with Cambridge Place should be considered.
3. The Esk St No 1 car park (opposite the ICC admin building) could be redeveloped with a car parking building. Any car parking building replacing this surface car park should have an active, commercial edge facing the street. This takes up space and so do vehicle ramps and vertical circulation. In order to significantly increase its capacity at least two decks should be constructed.
4. The Esk St No 2 car park: *similar to Option 3.*
5. The Don Street car park: *similar to Option 3.*



ABOVE FIG. 3-8: Parking options

6. Don-Deveron car park: *similar to Option 3.*
7. The William Todd & Co Building in Don Street may be available in the near future. It could be acquired and developed with parking (approximately 80 car parks) behind commercial edges (approximately 1000m<sup>2</sup> divided over both Don and Spey Streets) on the ground floor and one or more floors above (approximately 130 car parks per deck). Vehicle and pedestrian access should be off both Don and Spey Streets, and the SIT Arcade would function as the main pedestrian link with Esk Street. Alternatively, this

#### LEGEND

- Paid car park (ICC)
- Paid car park (private operator)
- Green belt
- Possible on-street parking increase

site could accommodate a large office development, with or without a component of public parking.

8. The block between Wood and Tay Streets has been indicated as a redevelopment opportunity (possibly with retention of the historic facades on Tay Street) frequently in the working and consultation sessions. Under **Priority H**, it is identified as a potential location for the possible relocation of the Southland Museum and Art Gallery. Integrated with this, a car parking building (possibly working with the approximately one storey fall of the land) could be developed. An alternative option would be a car parking building without the museum component.
9. The eastern (later) addition to the Southland Times Building on Esk Street (as well as the vehicle lane and car park around it) could be redeveloped with a car parking building. However, the site may not have the right proportions for an efficient car parking layout. Its prime location also makes it valuable for other development opportunities.

#### ON-STREET CAR PARKING

10. Under **Priority F**, the scope for introducing parking in the median in Tay Street is presented. Approximately 100 car parks could be gained, although the exact number is heavily dependent on the detailed design, required distance from intersections, and the extent of planting.
11. Also under **Priority F**, the replacement of some of the bus bays in Dee Street (in front of the cinema and in front of the library) by angled car parking is proposed. A small increase in car parks could be achieved and the exact numbers are dependent on how much space for buses is to be retained. Generous disabled parking should be part of this.

#### PRIVATE OFF-STREET PARKING

12. One or more additional decks on the H&J Smith car parking building was identified as technically feasible by Council staff members. The Council could encourage this to be explored further, possibly including considering developing the street edge on

the ground floor as an active retail or commercial edge, improving the quality of that part of Esk Street.

13. Wilson Parking is currently expanding their offer within and around the city centre. The Council could follow the approach to let the private sector cater for the increase in parking supply within the city centre should the need for that be identified.

#### PREFERENCE

- Options 1, 2, 7, 8, 10, 11 are supported and should be further explored.
- Options 3, 4, 5 and 6 are less preferred due to their somewhat peripheral location and limited feasibility.
- Option 9 is less preferred due to the central location of the site and its difficult proportions.
- Options 12 and 13 are less preferred due to their dependence on private sector for parking supply, which could be crucial for the economic wellbeing of the city centre.
- Options 1 (in case its opening hours are extended), 2, 7 and 11 are most supportive to night time activities.
- Options 10 and 11 are most likely the most affordable options, although consultation with NZTA is crucial as it affects the State Highways.

#### PROPOSALS

There are some actions which could be undertaken in the short term in reasonable certainty that they would be seen by the public and by the business community as positive interventions. These may include:

- Option 10: Reinstatement of centre parking in Tay Street after consultation and traffic analysis
- Option 11: Reconsideration of the spaces currently occupied by bus stops. The bus services are currently under review. An element of this review could be rescheduled so that large spaces do not have to be set aside for infrequent occupation by several busses at once.
- The Council could consider obtaining city centre sites as part of a land banking and site rationalisation programme, while in the short term using these as car parks.

### Other parking related proposals

The consultation and working sessions identified the following parking related issues worth investigating:

- Signage to public car parks, especially for visitors. Better signage and direction may be needed so that people are led more intuitively to available parks. Ultimately this could include real-time information on available capacities. It should be noted that many visitors refer to the Visitor Information Centre for information on city centre car parking.
- The feasibility of campervan parking in city centre streets. The Crescent could be specifically improved to accommodate campervan parking.
- The needs of tour coaches in the city centre.
- The location and supply of disabled car parks.
- The location and supply of bike parking facilities.

ROLES DURING IMPLEMENTATION	
Agency/ party	Role
Invercargill City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Commission a detailed parking study</li> <li>→ If the parking study identifies a parking need, consider whether this need should be addressed by the Council or not</li> <li>→ If it is decided that additional car parks should be providing, consider options 1, 2, 7 and 8</li> <li>→ Investigate and consult on Options 10 and 11</li> <li>→ Consider a land banking and site rationalisation programme, and dedicate sites obtained to car parking in the short term</li> </ul>
NZTA	Consultation partner for ICC for all issues affecting the State Highways
H&J Smith	Consider increasing the capacity of the car parking building in Esk St
General community	Affected party to be consulted

Priority:

F

## The improved integration of Tay and Dee Streets

### RELATES MOST STRONGLY TO:

#### LTCCP COMMUNITY OUTCOME

**4. We are healthy people**

**6. A treasured environment which we care for and which supports us now and into the future**

#### SPATIAL PLAN (DRAFT) OBJECTIVES

**2. The city centre is where people gather**

**3. The city centre is acknowledged as the primary centre for retailing, business, culture and entertainment**

**7. The city centre is defined with entrances and gateways and has clearly recognisable precincts**

**10. The city centre has clear, user-friendly, logical and less ambiguous traffic circulation and parking**

#### OBJECTIVE

The objective under this priority is to find a better balance between the State Highway functions of Tay and Dee Streets, and their role as a pedestrian friendly place which contributes to the city centre's retail, social and employment roles.

#### CONTEXT

State Highway 1 links Invercargill with Dunedin and Bluff, and includes Tay and Clyde Streets. State Highway 6 links Invercargill and Queenstown and includes Dee Street. They converge at "Bank Corner" – the intersection of Dee, Tay and Clyde Streets.

According to representatives of the New Zealand Transport Agency and the Council's traffic engineers, the State Highways are catering for a relatively small

proportion of through-traffic, and a relatively large proportion of local Invercargill traffic. Through-traffic functions are instead fulfilled by Bond Street (much of it heavy traffic) and Queens Drive and Gala Street. Tay Street carries approximately 3000 vehicles per day and Dee Street approximately 7000. Both streets have two general vehicle lanes in each direction.

The State Highways have several pedestrian crossings, of which three are in the form of zebra crossings (refer to Figure 3-9) and a number operated with traffic signals.

#### ISSUE

Consultation identified the following issues relative to the State Highways:

- The pedestrian quality along these streets is poor. One could argue that this has a flow-on effect on the retail quality of the street edges.
- The State Highways cause a severance within the city centre.

From observations it also seems that these streets are also somewhat harder to negotiate for parking manoeuvres, property access and turning, and that cycling may be more dangerous than in other streets in the city.

#### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

In response to the above issues it is proposed that the following initiatives are further investigated in terms of their technical feasibility (refer to Figure 3-10 overleaf):

##### Traffic signals timing pro pedestrian

- The timing of the traffic signals could be adjusted to reduce waiting times for pedestrians and extend the



ABOVE FIG. 3-9: One of the three zebra crossings on the State Highways

opportunities for crossing the street. Whether this should be an extension of the periods that the pedestrian light is green, or a greater frequency of the green phase for pedestrians, it should be analysed from a traffic engineering point of view. In either scenario, general traffic through the city centre has to accept small delays in favour of better walkability.

- Shelter could be improved for pedestrians waiting at pedestrian signals. Consideration should be given to glass structures that provide cover against rain and wind, whilst still allowing for good visibility. Trees in strategic places could assist with this and at the same time soften the appearance of the State Highway environment.

##### Right turn into Esk Street

Currently only southbound traffic on Dee Street can take a left turn into Esk Street. Northbound traffic as well as traffic coming from Dunedin via Tay Street and then Dee Street has to pass Don Street (currently one-way westbound) and turn into Spey Street or take a U-turn on Dee Street to get close to Esk Street, currently the most vibrant fine-grain retail street. For locals who know Invercargill this may not be problematic, but for visitors



this could easily be a deterrent to stop and engage with the city and its facilities. Necessitating U-turns also causes additional vehicle kilometres on Dee Street and complicated turning manoeuvres on the Don Street intersection.

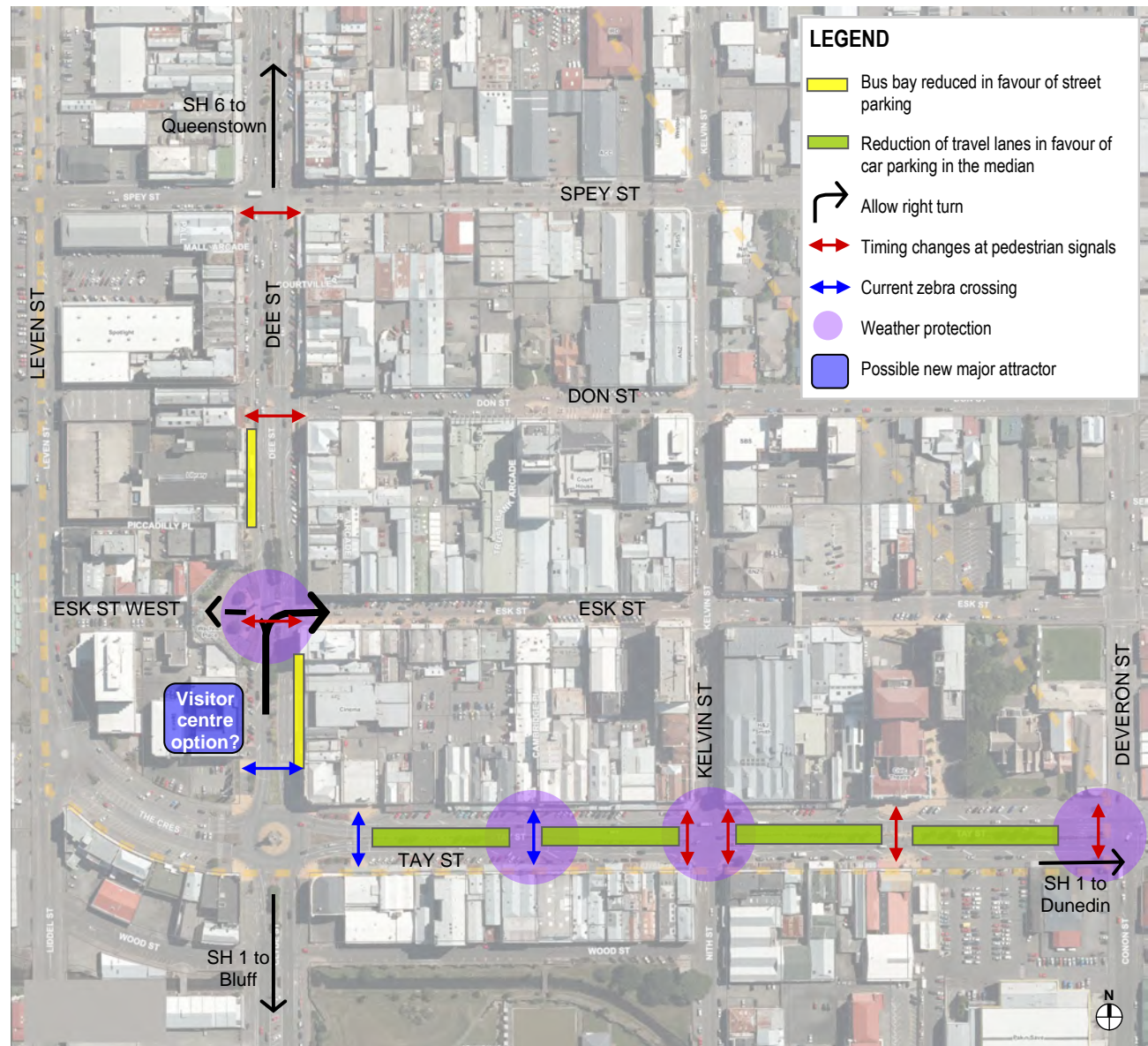
It is proposed that a right turn into Esk St be investigated, preferably without removing the gateway columns and adding a turning bay.

In combination with this, it is important to promote Esk Street as a calmed, pedestrian focussed street, where vehicles move at pedestrian speeds. An open space proposal for Esk Street (**Priority G**) will contribute to this.

Consideration should also be given to allowing slow traffic into Esk Street West (through Wachner Place) in the long term. Observations have indicated (and lessons from other New Zealand towns indicate similarly) that cutting Esk Street West off for traffic as well as making it harder for pedestrians to get there, has negatively contributed to the land use quality. The preferred proposal for Wachner Place (**Priority G**) allows for a narrow vehicle thoroughfare in a shared-space arrangement as an easily implementable retrofit.

**Parking**

→ Currently there are large bus bays in front of the cinema (southbound) and in front of the library (northbound). It is proposed that a significant reduction in length is investigated from a bus operational point of view. The bus services are currently under review. An element of this review could be rescheduling so that large spaces do not have to be set aside for infrequent occupation by several busses at once. It may be that only one bay (instead of the current five in front of the cinema) may be sufficient. The space gained should be used for kerbside parking and an occasional taxi stand. The benefits of this would be an improvement of the footpath quality as parked cars act as a better buffer between pedestrians and moving traffic on Dee Street than large bus bays that are mostly empty, especially during the off-peak period. Parking



ABOVE FIG. 3-10: Proposals regarding the integration of Dee and Tay Streets



manoeuvres will also have a calming effect on the traffic.

- Traffic loadings on Tay Street are significantly lower than on Dee Street. There may be opportunities in Tay Street to reduce the number of lanes from two to one in each direction. The space gained could be used for car parking in the median, interspersed with areas of planting. Second hand accounts voiced during the consultation indicated that the removal of centre parks from Tay Street about 10 years ago led to a downgrade in retail success for adjacent shops. This initiative will also lead to calming of the traffic due to parking manoeuvres and an increase of pedestrians crossing to access the car parks in the median. Car parks in this strategic and visible location may also help people leave their car early upon arrival in the city centre and entice them to walk to their destinations.

**Land use**

The western side of Dee Street and the southern side of Tay Street seem to suffer most from the perceived severance by the State Highways. Wherever the Council is in a position to help attract significant institutions or facilities to these ‘weaker’ sides of the streets, overcoming this severance should be considered. Locating a strong attractor ‘across the road’ may increase the pedestrian flow across the streets, which will help shift the balance more in favour of the crossing pedestrian. This consideration is particularly relevant for the Visitor Information Centre (refer to Priority B) and the Southland Museum and Art Gallery (refer to Priority H).

**Cycling**

This Action Plan promotes increasing opportunities for safe cycling through the city centre in general. However, it is not suggested to promote cycle lanes on Dee Street or on Tay Street from Spey to Deveron, because the cycle speed expectation will cause conflicts with crossing pedestrians. Cycle lanes would also threaten on-street parking and in a centre where shops still have a strong reliance on cars for their economic well-being, this is not promoted.

In situations where the de-facto speeds are lower than posted (and on these streets that seems the case) it is more acceptable to have cycling safely occur in the vehicle lane. Given Invercargill’s flat terrain and easy connections (as part of the grid-system) it is also suggested that cycling can safely be accommodated on streets parallel to the State Highways, that generally take less vehicle traffic than the State Highways.

**FURTHER WORK REQUIRED**

All the above proposed initiatives have been discussed with NZTA and ICC traffic engineers at a preliminary level. Representatives of NZTA have indicated that the agency is open for further discussion. In summary the following issues should be explored in more detail:

**Short term ‘with reasonable certainty’**

- Reducing the number of bus stops in front of the cinema and in front of the library in Dee Street, and replacing these by angled parking.
- Considering the most suitable ways to protect pedestrians waiting at the traffic lights from wind and rain.

**More consideration and careful assessment of the technical feasibility, the costs and benefits**

- Changes to the traffic light timing in favour of pedestrians.
- A right-turn from Dee Street into Esk Street towards the east, with retention of the gateway markers and without an additional turning bay.
- Introducing slow vehicle access into Esk-West (left in only or full access with traffic lights). This should be considered in conjunction with redesign options for Wachner Place.
- Reducing the number of lanes in Tay Street and including centre parking and planting in the median.
- Investigating whether a possible relocation of the Visitor Information Centre and / or the Southland Museum and Art Gallery to the city centre would result in a desired increase of pedestrians crossing Dee and

Tay Streets, but also whether or not it would result in an increase of traffic on Dee and Tay Streets (instead of Gala Street and Queens Drive) and what the impacts on the pedestrian quality in these streets would be.

ROLES DURING IMPLEMENTATION	
Agency/ party	Role
Invercargill City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Leading the engagement with the NZTA to consider the feasibility of the proposals</li> <li>→ Leading the engagement with the bus operators regarding the feasibility of reducing the length of the bus bays in front of the cinema and in front of the library</li> <li>→ Investigating the traffic effects of land-use decisions</li> <li>→ Designing weather protection for pedestrians waiting at key intersections</li> </ul>
NZTA	Consultation partner for ICC for all issues affecting the State Highways
Bus operator	Consultation partner for ICC for the proposals regarding the bus bays
General community	Affected party to be consulted

Priority:

**G**

# Public spaces

**RELATES MOST STRONGLY TO:**

**LTCCP COMMUNITY OUTCOME**

- 1. Southland is a great place to live**
- 3. Safe places in a caring society that is free from crime**
- 4. We are healthy people**

**SPATIAL PLAN (DRAFT) OBJECTIVES**

- 2. The city centre is where people gather**
- 3. The city centre is acknowledged as the primary centre for retailing, business, culture and entertainment**
- 6. The city centre has places that meet the challenges of bad weather and make the most of good weather**
- 7. The city centre is defined with entrances and gateways and has clearly recognisable precincts**

**OBJECTIVE**

The objective under this priority is to identify measures that result in vibrant and exciting, upgraded, and new public spaces that provide an enhanced visitor, shopping and worker experience. Ultimately this is to help convince the business and institutional community to keep (and locate new) businesses in the city centre.

**CONTEXT**

The functions of urban open spaces include social, cultural, and commercial exchange. Also, the public realm plays a role in conveying the image of the city. It should be noted that this includes streets and footpaths, and not

just places. For an urban public space to be successful, the following aspects are important (criteria adapted from a checklist developed by Gehl Architects, Denmark):

- Protection –against traffic, crime and violence, unpleasant sensory experiences.
- Comfort –walking, sitting, staying; opportunities for contact; activities at various times of the day and year; attractions and interactions.
- Delight –a human scale, positive aspects of climate, positive aesthetic and sensory experiences.

Any public open space upgrade should be guided by these criteria.

**ISSUES**

Consultation and observations identified the following issues pertaining to the open space quality within the city centre as a whole:

- Lack of shelter.
- Lack of seating.
- Lack of urban open spaces with a soft, landscaped appearance.
- Lack of trees within the streetscape.
- Lack of play opportunities for children.
- 'There is no reason for young people to visit the CBD' due to the lack of a safe place for youth to congregate (in addition to Wachner Place that does not have a good reputation). Such a space might include a basketball hoop and skate-able features.

Issues pertaining to specific places include:

- Wachner Place does not deliver the qualities required from the main urban public space. It is not inviting, lacks sheltered seating, is disconnected from the rest

of the city centre, and severs the visual and physical connection with Esk Street West.

- The space in front of the cinema is underperforming as a public space.
- Esk Street is developing as the main place for café and restaurant seating on the southern side of the street, contrasted by the lack of public seating not associated with buying food or a beverage.
- The Council owns the former bowling green on the corner of Esk and Deveron Streets. However, it is not perceived or used as a public open space.

**SOLUTION**

In response to these issues the following proposals are identified:

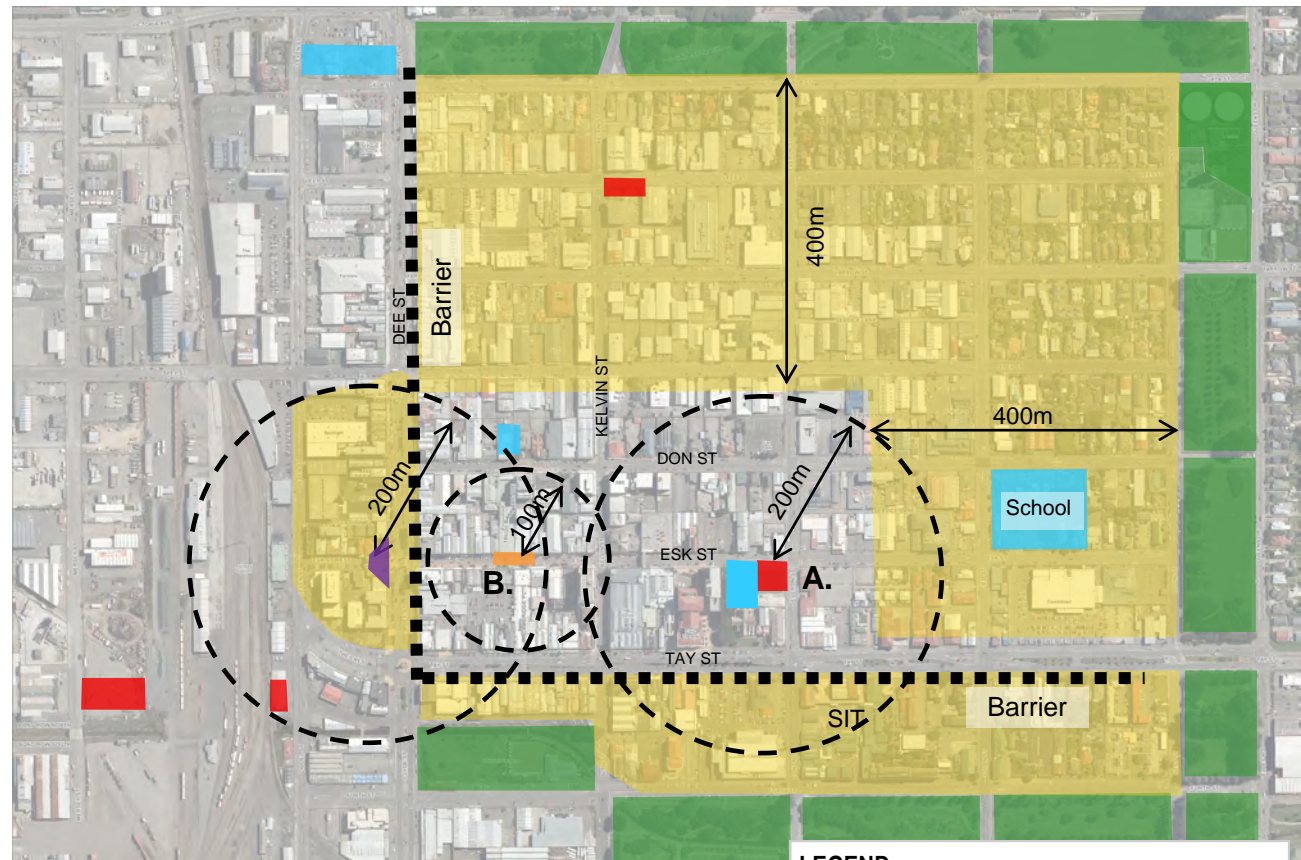
- Open space opportunities for the area within the green belt.
- Open space opportunities at a scale appropriate to the city centre.
- Upgrade proposals for the furniture and lighting in Esk Street.
- Options (one preferred) for a public space in Esk Street.
- Options (one preferred) for improvements to Wachner Place.
- A footpath upgrade programme.
- Proposals for a city centre market space.

Along with the associated analysis these are presented in detail over the following pages.

### Open space assessment

The larger open space context of the city centre was analysed (refer to Figure 3-11). The following headline observations can be made:

- The green belt surrounds the city centre on three sides. The green belt is mostly public and accommodates a large number of features and attractions.
- Most of the city centre is out of reach (more than 400m walking distance) of the green belt or other major public spaces, with the exception of the area south of Tay Street.
- The portion of the green belt south of Tay Street provides a quality experience due to the stream, the flower garden, St Mary's Basilica etc.
- Even though the southern portion is close to the city centre, State Highway 1 forms a barrier, particularly in bad weather.
- Wachner Place is the main public space serving particularly the western part of the city centre. It has a reasonably high use, especially during lunch times on warm summer days. A good proportion of the city centre lies within walking distance (in the case of a major urban open space 200m) of Wachner Place. However, Dee Street forms a barrier that diminishes the catchment of Wachner Place.
- Several public spaces are or appear privatised. A notable one is the Bowling Green on the corner of Esk and Deveron Streets, refer to (A) in Figure 3-11. Upgrade of and full public access to this space would fill a gap in the city centre area that is within walking distance of a public open space. A distance of 200m is applied, which is a realistic expectation for a public open space of this size.
- A small new urban public open space in Esk Street would fill a smaller gap in the public open space network, (refer to (B)) and provide a stepping stone between the former bowling green and Wachner Place. Due to its smaller size, a distance of 100m is indicated, which covers the entire length of Esk Street between Dee and Kelvin Streets.



ABOVE FIG. 3-11 City centre wide public open space assessment

- Several privately owned open spaces serve an open space function, including visual amenity.

**LEGEND**

- Green belt
- Urban public open space
- Potential new urban public open space
- Public open space –privatised or appearing privatised
- Significant private open space
- Area practically within walking distance from major open space
- Area theoretically within walking distance from major open space
- Barrier



## Potential open space connections and urban spaces

In response to the analysis on the previous page, a number of possible open space suggestions are proposed for further investigation (Refer to Figure 3-12):

- Strengthen the connections with the green belt via Kelvin and Deveron Streets. This will encourage locals and visitors to combine a visit to the city centre with a visit to particularly the southern portions of the green belt. It could form a 'gateway' for walking and cycling throughout the green belt. Long-term, improving linkages with the New River Estuary and the Waihopai River would be desirable.
- Create weather shelters at signalled pedestrian crossings on the State Highways and particularly around those intersections indicated for their strategic positions in the network of routes connecting open spaces. These include the intersections of Deveron and Tay Streets, connecting SIT with the city centre core, and the green belt. Shelter across Dee Street will help strengthen the connection between Esk Street and Wachner Place. This issue is referred to under **Priority F**.
- Develop the former bowling club site with seating on the edge of Esk Street, connected with the Blade of Grass area. Develop a family / youth oriented public open space behind it.
- Develop the two council car parking sites across the road for a performance site or possibly a space for a weekend market (either Saturday or Sunday) while remaining available for use as a car park during the week.
- There is an opportunity to develop a small urban space (approximately 15x25 metres) in central Esk Street, connecting Cambridge Place with the SIT Arcade. This proposal is presented in more detail later in this document (Refer to Figures 3-17 and 3-18). Other options explored for Esk Street are illustrated on Figure 3-19. Provision should be made for Esk Street to be easily closed for special events, for example a buskers' festival or open-air concerts, in which case the proposed small urban space would provide a very appropriate focus or stage.



ABOVE FIG. 3-12: Potential open space connections and urban spaces

### LEGEND

- Green belt
- Important community function
- Possible open space improvement
- Possible route to be strengthened
- Intersection needing additional pedestrian shelter
- \* Existing major public space

### Urban open space assessment

Figure 3-13 illustrates the open space amenity in the city centre, relative to how 'active' the building edges facing the street are. This analysis identifies:

- Most areas are within 50m of an small urban space.
- However, most small urban spaces are nothing more than a brick paved area and lack seating and rest places.
- The area around the Tay-Kelvin intersection is underprovided and forms a missing stepping stone en route from the city centre to the green belt.

In response to this a footpath upgrade strategy is proposed overleaf.

### Open space opportunities

Figure 3-14 illustrates an assessment of all opportunities for open space development.

- **Esk Street West** (opportunity within the streetscape): requires work. It is available as a public street, but its closed-off nature from Wachner Place and the barrier caused by Dee Street makes it feel a long distance from the centre of Esk Street, which is considered the heart of the city centre.
- An internal / external space integrated with the **library building**: requires work, as it involves the building and may not be perceived as fully publicly accessible at all times.
- Existing spaces on the **south side of Esk Street**: good opportunities. Two options: either the integration of street furniture into the existing 7m footpath area or to widen the pedestrian area to create space for more furniture.
- **Southland Times Building**: opportunity that needs work. In the case of redevelopment, the building could be set back by a few metres to create a small north-facing urban seating space.
- Car park west of the **ICC building** (associated with Blade of Grass area): requires work.
- **St John's Church**: good opportunity to develop a 3m strip for seats with the church landscape as a backdrop.
- **Bowling green**: good opportunity for a family teen park fronting onto Esk Street with seating and youth-focussed activities such as (but not limited to) a climbing wall and a skate-friendly landscape, while retaining some green.
- **Car parks on Esk Street** (beside Scottish Hall): good opportunity for a market / performance space, whilst retaining some car parking function.



ABOVE FIG. 3-13: Urban spaces, seating and edge conditions



ABOVE FIG. 3-14: Public open space opportunities



## Footpath upgrade

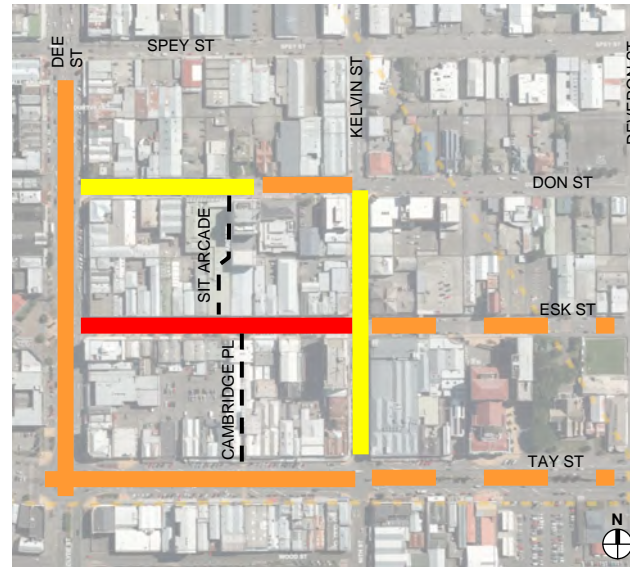
In order to encourage pedestrian activity and support the commercial activities, a staged footpath upgrade programme is proposed.

Not all footpaths in the city centre are currently in the same condition. For the purpose of this report the following classification of the existing footpath conditions can be identified (refer to Figure 3-15):

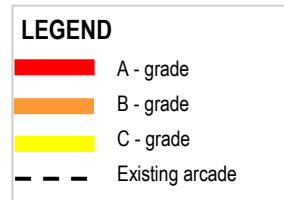
- A-grade: Esk Street between Dee and Kelvin Streets could be considered the benchmark, with continuous brick paving and many elements of high quality streetscape furniture and artworks.
- B-grade: several street blocks contain incidental areas of amenity paving and furniture, mainly located on street corners. The sections in between these areas consist of a basic hot mix, a concrete kerb and no notable furniture. These blocks are:
  - The three southernmost blocks of Dee Street.
  - The two westernmost blocks of Tay Street.
  - Esk Street between Kelvin and Deveron Streets (incidental).
  - A small part of Don Street.
- C-grade: all other city centre streets feature a hot mix paving with concrete kerbing and no furniture or streetscape elements, except for the incidental lamppost, tree or rubbish bins. Most notably these streets are:
  - Kelvin Street between Tay and Don Streets.
  - Don Street between Dee Street and the Court House.

The following upgrades are proposed (Figure 3-16):

- From B-grade to A-grade:
  - The three southernmost blocks of Dee Street.
  - The westernmost block of Tay Street.
  - Esk Street between Kelvin and Deveron Streets.
  - Don Street between the Court House and Kelvin Street.
- From incidental B-grade to continuous B-grade:
  - Tay Street between Kelvin and Deveron Streets
  - Esk Street between Kelvin and Deveron Streets.
- From C-grade to A-grade: Don Street between Dee Street and the Court House.



ABOVE FIG. 3-15: Existing footpath quality



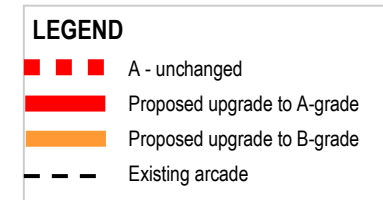
- From C-grade to B-grade: Kelvin Street between Don and Tay Streets

### RATIONALE AND PROPOSED SEQUENCE

1. Don Street is selected for a footpath upgrade to support the commercial activities and particularly the nightlife activities near its western end. It will also support redevelopment of the Todd's Building and stimulate use of the SIT Arcade.
2. Esk Street East is selected for a footpath upgrade to stimulate pedestrian activity to and from the proposed open space on the Deveron Street corner, support a possible market in this street, and stimulate redevelopment along this block.



ABOVE FIG. 3-16: Footpath upgrades



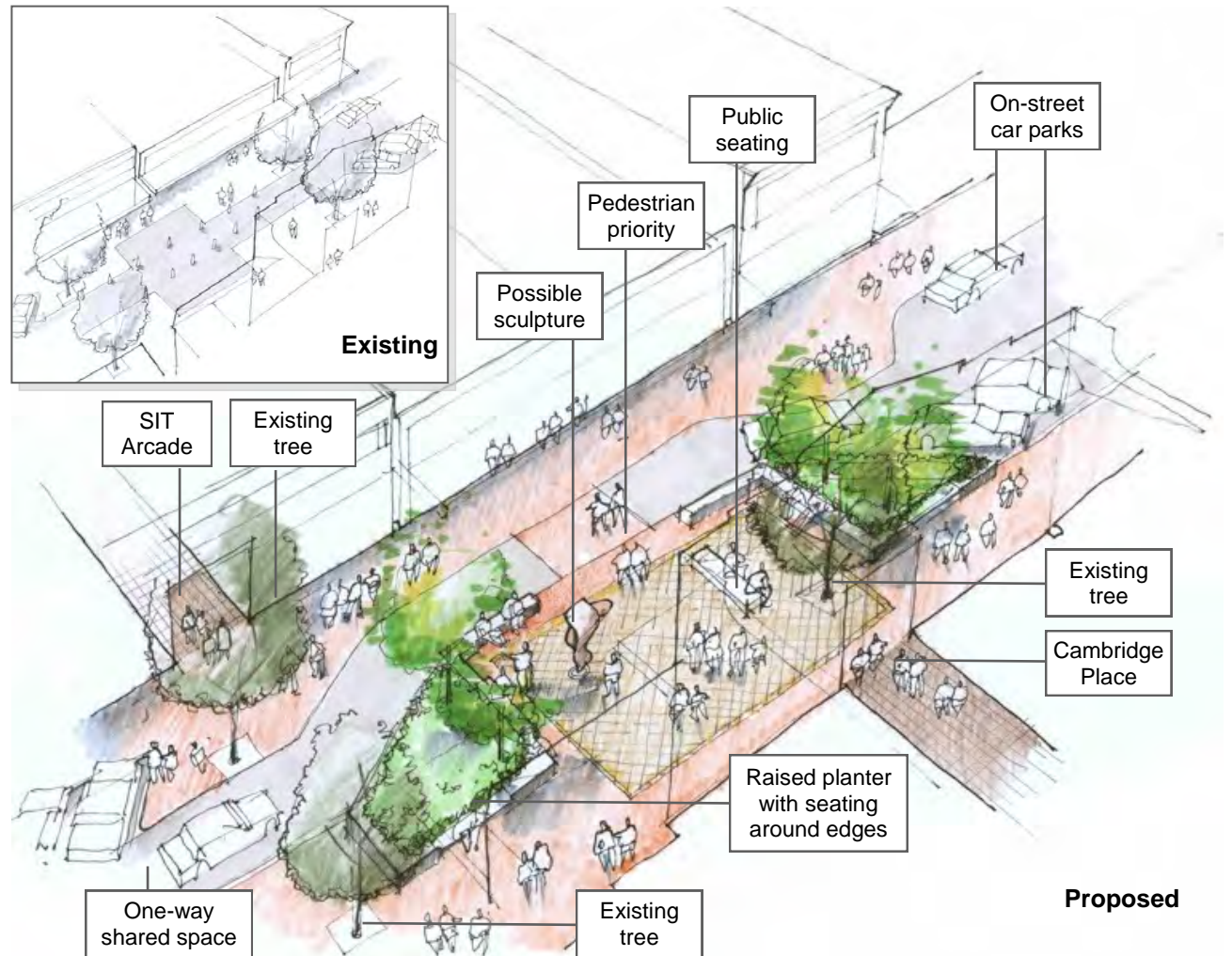
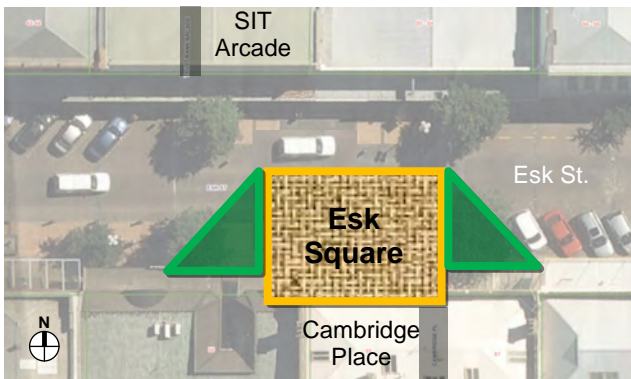
3. The State Highways (Dee and Tay Street) are selected for footpath upgrades in order to support the pedestrian-oriented activities along these streets. A staged upgrade starting from the 'Bank Corner' and working north and east would be a logical way to respond to budget limitations.
4. Kelvin Street is selected for a footpath upgrade to facilitate the connection between Tay, Esk, and Don Streets. An upgrade would also support pedestrian-oriented commercial activities along this street.

## Esk Street Square

Figures 3-17 and 3-18 illustrate a proposed new 15 x 25m square on Esk Street, in the area near the exits of Cambridge Place and the SIT Arcade.

Characteristics include:

- Its orientation provides for both good solar access and shelter against winds from the south.
- Existing trees are retained, with the exception of one.
- The existing traffic regime (one-way, shared space) is retained, with the narrowing of the space for cars as well as the lateral shift providing further traffic calming.
- The raised planters on either side of the square provide a soft appearance and their edges could be used for seating. The material of the walls should match the existing stone walls that are used in other places around the city centre.
- The planters also control vehicular and pedestrian movement. The walls should be kept low for both traffic safety as well as crime prevention.
- A generous number of public seats are provided.
- A large artwork and / or water feature could be integrated in the design, possibly also used as play equipment. Water jets could be incorporated in part of the pavement for summer-time play.
- Room is left in the centre of the space to allow free pedestrian movement in and out of the arcades. The footpath area is also kept open for pedestrians.
- All existing on-street car parks can be retained.



ABOVE FIG. 3-18: The proposed square in Esk Street; the existing situation in the inset (artist's impressions only)

LEFT FIG. 3-17: Indicative concept (plan view) for the proposed square in Esk Street (not to scale)

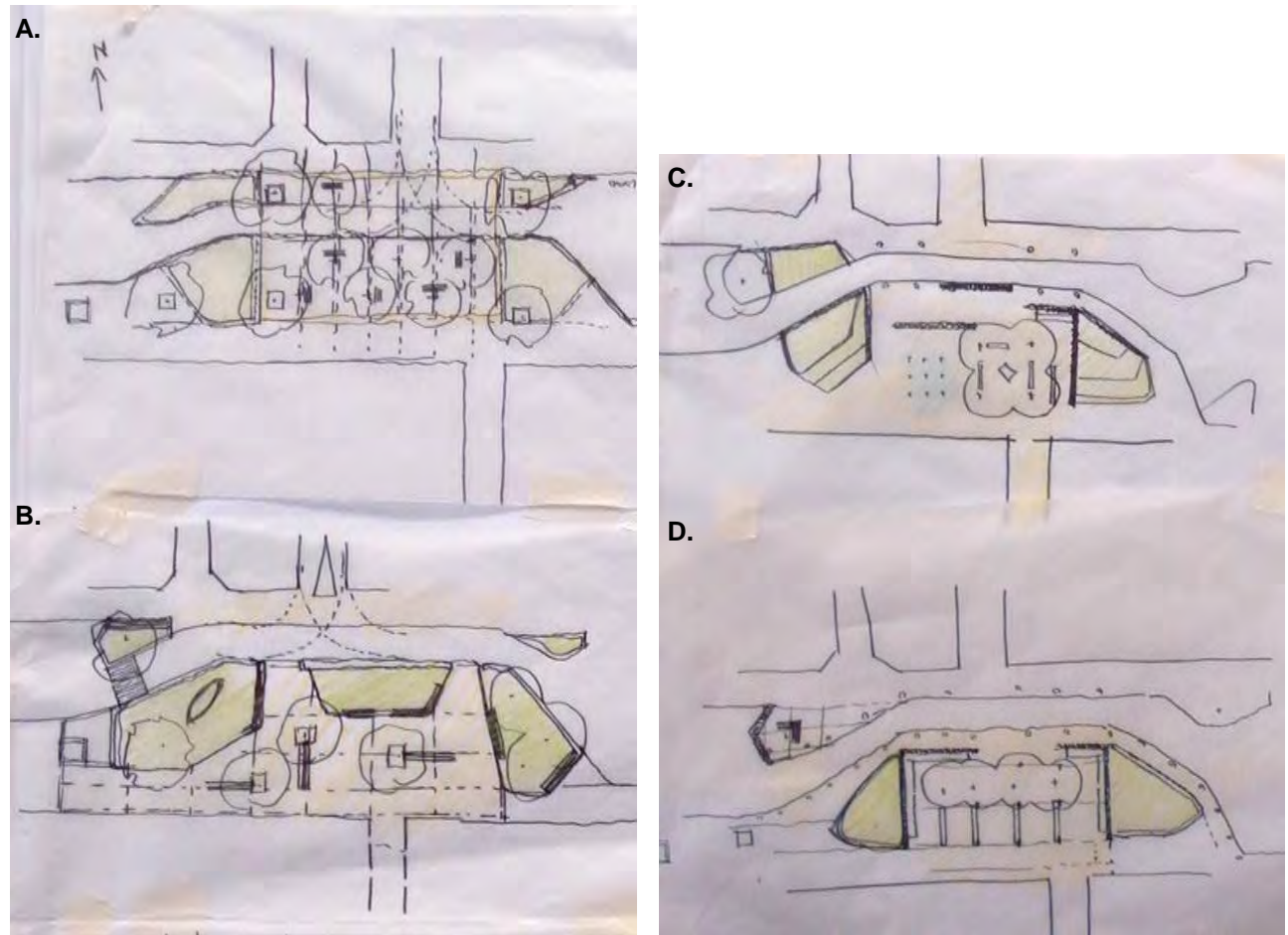
*Other options explored for the proposed Esk Square are included overleaf.*



## ESK STREET SQUARE

### A range of spatial options for the proposed Esk Street Square

- All green areas shown are planters raised by 450-600mm which edges could act as seating and a barrier to vehicles.
- Stand-alone seating in paving.
- Art pieces that could also be used as play equipment are indicated (Option B).
- Blue crosses depict water jets in the pavement for summer time play (Option C).
- The heavy black lines indicate walls that would match the existing stone walls that are used in other places around the City Centre



ABOVE FIG. 3-19: Open space options explored for the proposed Esk Street Square (indicative sketches only)

## Esk Street

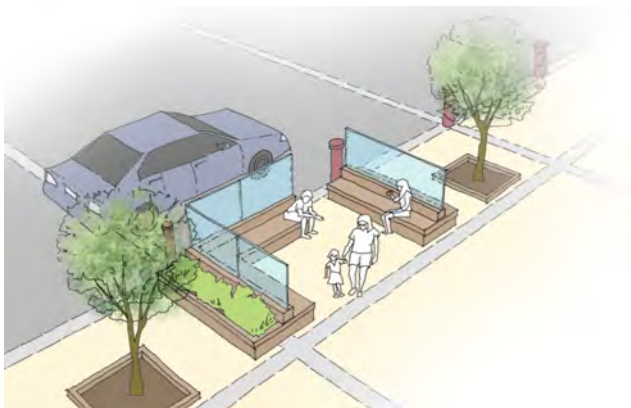
### STREET FURNITURE

Figure 3-20 shows a survey of furniture and trees in Esk Street. The analysis identifies that there is a fairly good provision and distribution of trees and pieces of artwork, the latter especially in the western part. Esk Street is dominated by café seating, however, public seating provision in Esk Street is notably deficient.

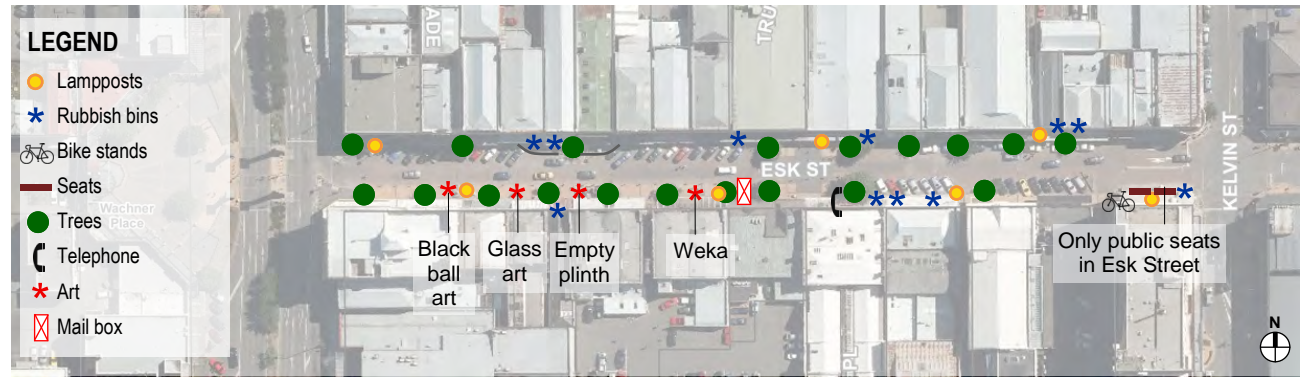
### SEATING

Figure 3-21 shows areas proposed for additional public seating in response to the above analysis. The focus should be on the southern, north facing, side of the street around the café area. The proposed central square area will also accommodate generous public seating. The northern, shaded side of the street should accommodate a regular distribution of areas for short rests. Fewer seats are needed, as this side of the street would likely attract lower use and a greater turnover.

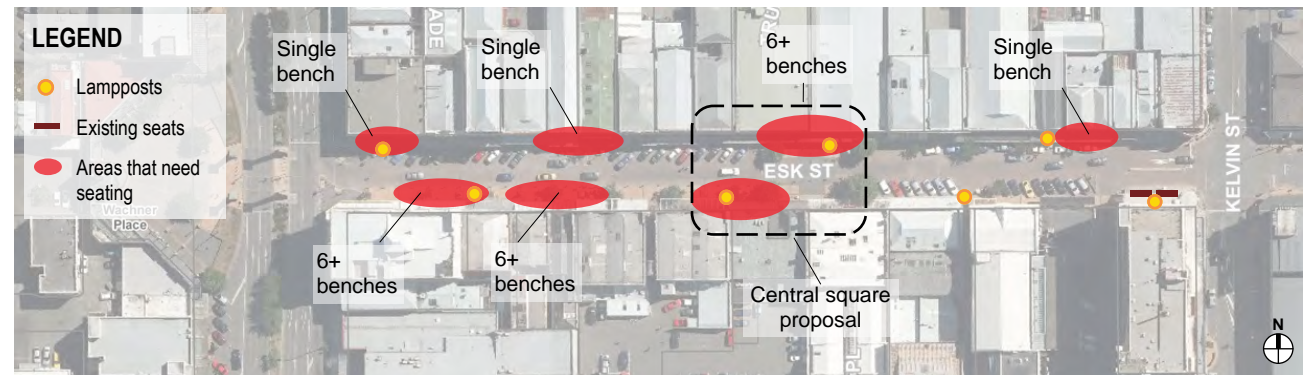
Figure 3-22 Shows a possible concept for these proposed public seating areas in Esk Street. Glass panels could be integrated to provide shelter. An L-shape arrangement would stimulate social interaction and separate the seating area from the (slow) moving vehicles.



ABOVE FIG. 3-22: Proposed public seating concept



ABOVE FIG. 3-20: Esk Street: assessment of existing street furniture



ABOVE FIG. 3-21: Esk Street: proposed areas of seating

## LIGHTING

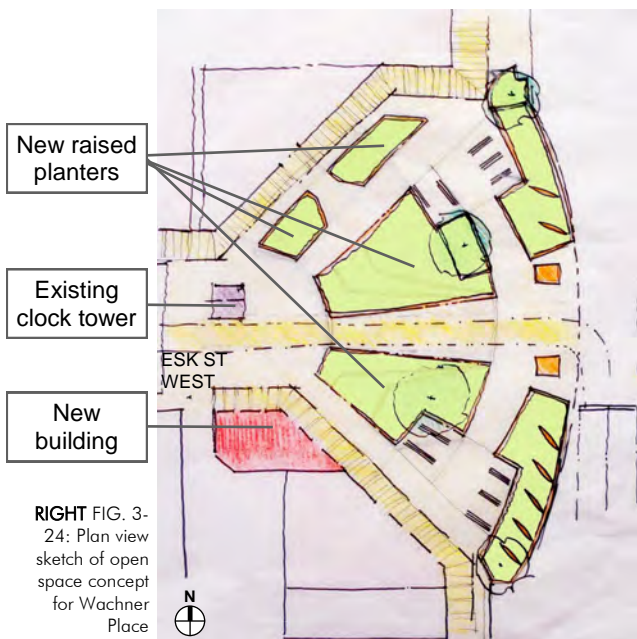
Figure 3-23 shows an analysis of street lighting in Esk Street. Points to note include:

- A general lack of lighting at ground level with a notable gap around the mid-block area, where a new light is proposed.
- The current poles and lamp head design create a lot of light spill upwards with a lack of light being directed towards the ground. Many verandas cause shading on the footpath.
- The lights mounted underneath the verandas are crucial for public lighting. In some areas these lights are lacking.
- The current lampposts have a suitable height and a new light head would give a significantly improved light performance for pedestrians on the footpath and vehicles in the carriageway. LED-lighting should be considered.
- Lighting in the shopping areas of Dee, Tay and Don Street is generally sufficient.



ABOVE FIG. 3-23: Esk Street: assessment of existing lighting

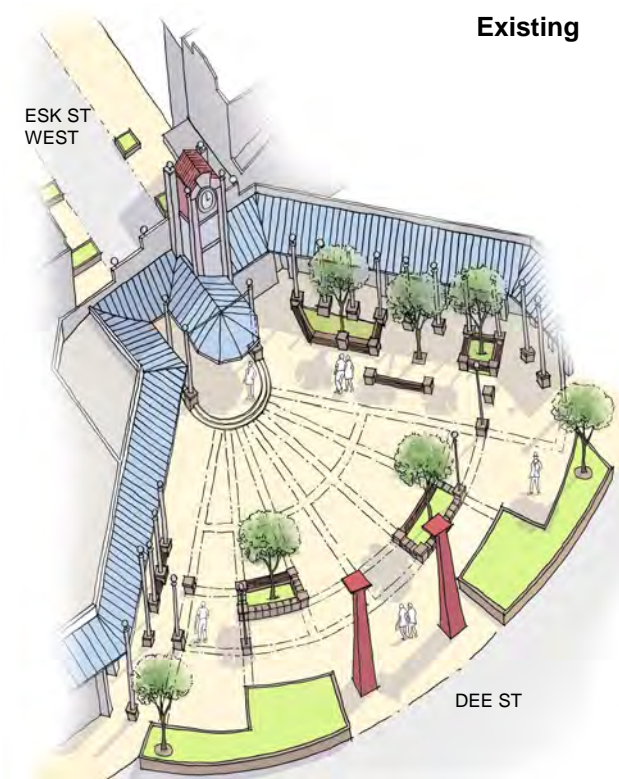




### Wachner Place

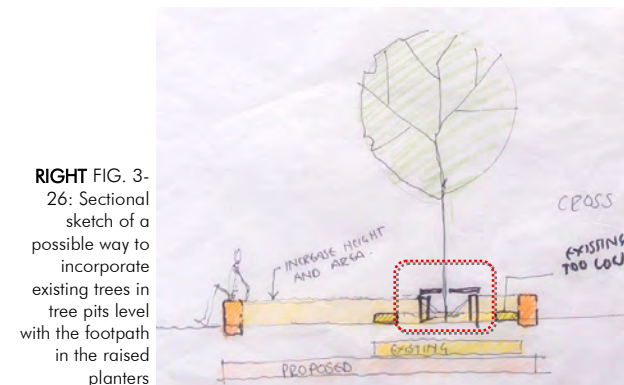
A redesign concept for Wachner Place is developed in response to the issues identified and observed. It is presented in Figures 3-24 and 3-25 and the following characteristics could be noted:

- Significantly more green space is added in the form of large raised grass planters that people can lie and sit on. These also have seating around their edges and have been designed in a way so the existing trees are retained (refer to Figure 3-26 for the detail).
- The new planter boxes are kept low for visibility.
- An opening through the centre of the space connects to Esk Street West.
- The canopies and glass panels near the Esk Street West entrance are removed, and the stage is removed to improve accessibility and visibility. Testing the climatic effects of the removal of the glass screens is proposed, with an option for these to be reinstated if required. Expert advice may be required.



ABOVE FIG. 3-25: Sketch of open space concept for Wachner Place (left) compared to the existing situation (right). Sketches based on early drawing by Gary Hesselin & Baxter Architects

- Additional public seating areas are created with glass panes providing shelter around these.
- The existing clock tower is retained and the space around it is freed up. A planter behind it leads into Esk Street West.
- Part of the stage is filled in with a commercial building (refer to Figure 3-24), providing an lively and activated frontage to the space, and also utilising a 'hidden' corner of the space. The building lines up with the building line in Esk Street West
- The gateway columns on Dee Street are retained.





ABOVE FIG. 3-27: Market options

### Market options

The idea to attract the Farmers Market to a location within the city centre was discussed during the consultation and working sessions. If the market can be attracted to the city centre, it is important that the market complements and works in support of the city centre commerce. Three possible locations are identified (Refer to Figure 3-27):

1. A market in and / or around the Scottish Hall, spilling over into Esk Street between Deveron and Kelvin Street. This will also support the central Esk Street shopping if shops are open on market days. The nearby former bowling green, identified for its family-

oriented open space potential, would work in support of this option. As it may result in temporary closure of the southern part of Esk Street (the westbound lane only), it is crucial to consult with St John's Church on this idea if the market is held on Sundays.

2. Redevelopment of the Todd building as a short term interim location for a covered market space with the car parking area behind it as an associated open air space. The SIT Arcade would have to function as an important pedestrian link to Esk Street.
3. Using the street and car parking space of the Crescent and its surrounding area. Detailed design is needed with particular consideration of the traffic function.

ROLES DURING IMPLEMENTATION	
Agency/ party	Role
Invercargill City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Detailed investigation of open space opportunities identified</li> <li>→ Detailed design of Esk Street Square</li> <li>→ Detailed design of Esk Street furniture and lighting</li> <li>→ Detailed design of Wachner Place redesign</li> <li>→ Detailed design of footpath upgrade programme</li> <li>→ Detailed consideration of the market options, including consultation with the operators</li> </ul>
NZTA	Consultation partner for ICC for all issues affecting the State Highways
Vibrant Invercargill	Partner in the consideration of the market options
Farmers Market operators	Partner in the consideration of the market options
General community	Affected party to be consulted



Priority:

H

## Arts, culture and interpretation

### RELATES MOST STRONGLY TO:

#### LTCCP COMMUNITY OUTCOME

1. Southland is a great place to live
7. A well-educated and skilled community continually seeking further opportunities to learn

#### SPATIAL PLAN (DRAFT) OBJECTIVES

1. The city centre is a place with iconic buildings and institutions
3. The city centre is acknowledged as the primary centre for retailing, business, culture and entertainment
5. The city centre accommodates uses that are relevant to the community

### OBJECTIVE

The objective under this priority is to give full expression to Invercargill and Southland's historic and contemporary arts, and culture in the city centre.

### CONTEXT

Although it is dangerous to transpose findings from other places, it could be instructive to know that in Melbourne it was found that *Arts investment can generate a return of approximately 11:1\**, (when in comparison road investment achieves approximately 3:1 or 4:1). It could be investigated what the exact figures for Invercargill would be, but if integrated with commercial activities within the

\* Quote from: Rob Adams, Director of City Design, Melbourne City on a promotional video series called 'Sacred Spaces, the episode name is 'Melbourne's city laneways', Season 1. Produced by C31: Melbourne Community Television.)

city, the flow-on effects that art can generate should not be underestimated.

There is a growing acceptance of the importance of art in Southland. Venture Southland has recently released a Research Project on the state of the arts sector in Southland and a Draft Business Plan for a proposed arts organisation. This City Centre Outline Action Plan is integrated with that report. Findings and recommendations of it are not repeated here. Instead some recommendations, especially those with a relationship with the city centre and with a spatial component, are responded to in this Action Plan. In addition, some other points brought up during the consultation and working sessions are introduced and integrated.

The city centre should be seen as much more than a place for shopping. City centres are places where exchange is maximised while travel is minimised. This exchange can be commercial, but also social, and cultural in nature. It can be organised, but what is equally important and stimulating, is the spontaneous interactions. The city centre should form the heart, carrying the identity of the community.

### ISSUES

Consultation identified as the main issues pertaining to the arts sector and the Invercargill City Centre:

- The arts profile of the city centre should be lifted. The centre is not seen as a destination for arts. The arts are almost 'invisible' in the city centre.
- There is little city centre benefit from the arts sector. On the other side, there are few city centre assets

- suitable to attract arts related activities to take place in the city centre.
- The arts sector is disconnected, 'everybody does their own thing'. This weakens the opportunities for successful promotion of activities.
- There is a lack of city centre arts venues. Both for casual and formal use.
- There is a lack of coordination between arts managers and artists.
- There is a realisation that it is equally important for children to be creatively expressive as physically fit. In response to that, there is real momentum around arts related activities for children in Invercargill and Southland.
- There is a lack of affordable spaces in the city centre. Reasonable rent is a barrier to use the Civic Theatre and SIT Centrestage.
- The Repertory Society has its own intimate theatre near Countdown, but this location is too peripheral to be visible in the city centre.
- Foot traffic is a very important factor contributing to the success of the City Gallery Southland Art Society in Don Street.

### Southland Museum and Art Gallery

The responsibilities of this regional museum are twofold:

1. Tell local stories.
  2. Provide a window to the world though providing an opportunity for people to see exhibitions they otherwise had to travel overseas for.
- There are plans to extend the Southland Museum, Southland Art Gallery, and Visitor Information Centre in its current location on the edge of Queens Park.
  - The Southland Museum and Art Gallery would like to explore ways of improving linkages with Queens Park (arguably Invercargill's biggest asset), it could be seen as the centre of Invercargill. Queens Park at times becomes more of an arts centre than a park.
  - A significant body of opinion in the community appears to be of the view that the possibility of relocating both the Visitor Information Centre and the Southland Museum and Art Gallery to a city centre location should be explored.



ABOVE FIG. 3-28: City centre art pieces as play elements



ABOVE FIG. 3-29: Example of an arts-related story found in the Invercargill City Centre pavement

## PROPOSALS

The Council and relevant stakeholder groups should consider the following:

### General and organisational

- Links between artists and art administrators need to be strengthened. The regional arts organisation proposed in the Project Art Southland report would play a crucial role in this.
- Arts should be celebrated and made more visible in the city centre. Again, this would be one of the main tasks of the proposed regional arts organisation.
- Private art galleries should be included in an integrated promotional programme.
- Arts related activities taking place at SIT should be showcased in the city centre.
- Arts should be made visible in the public realm. Art pieces that could be used as play elements could be great attractions for families with children (Figure 3-28).
- The 'stories' of Southland and Invercargill should be told by local artists. Making this visible in the public realm is already taking place (refer to Figure 3-29) and could be built upon.

### Art venues

- A new arts centre or an improved existing venue could function as shared premises for art groups, choirs, dance groups etc. *The Hastings Opera House is an example of a facility which is used for a wide range of activities.* The idea of establishing a centre for children's art in Invercargill, reaching out to the wider South Island, should be included along with considering integrated studios where children work alongside 'real artists'.
- Vacant shops could be used as temporary studios or exhibition spaces. This not only makes the city centre look more active and alive, but may also help the art sector develop. *In Newcastle (NSW) a successful programme called 'Renew Newcastle' provides local artists with access to empty shops\*.*

\* For more information refer to: <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=nDt8FDkgFk%3D&tabid=208>

- In the short term, better signage and physical linkages between arts related activities in Queens Park and the city centre should be considered.
- Connections should be made with SIT fine arts and music students to use (upper storeys of) underutilised city centre buildings to practise music, and exhibition and studio space, particularly for final year students.
- In line with the identification of business precincts, (**Priority C**) the formation and recognition of an arts precinct should be considered.

### Southland Museum and Art Gallery

An openness to investigate the relocation of the Southland Museum and Art Gallery to a location within the city centre was indicated during the working sessions. At the same time, strong functional views for retaining it at the current location were recorded. This Outline Action Plan is not attempting to make an unqualified case for the relocation, but proposes that the Southland Museum and Art Gallery in collaboration with ICC should consider possible options for an inner city relocation of the Museum or the Art Gallery, or both.

If consideration is given to relocation to the city centre, the following criteria relative to its location should be considered:

- High exposure to passing traffic on the State Highways.
- Close proximity to the heart of the city centre.
- If possible, retaining one or more heritage buildings.
- Could it work as a catalyst and generate other benefits? Such as:
  - Incorporation of a large component of public car parking; and
  - Facilitation of visual and / or physical connections to other amenities (such as the green belt).
- A possible new building should fit well within the existing city centre fabric. It should relate to the height of surrounding buildings and incorporate possible heritage buildings / facades.
- The 'shop front' of the museum has to compete with (i.e. to be as good as or better than) surrounding shop fronts.



A possible relocation should account for the relocation costs without a penalty to the functional budget of these institutions.

**Examples form elsewhere**

- The Nelson Provincial Museum is an example of one that benefited from relocation in 2005 to a city centre location (The old Nelson Hotel, a heritage building in the middle of the city centre). Perhaps as a result, its visitor numbers more than doubled from the total of 25,000 visitors a year (half of which school children) to more than 50,000. The amount of walk-by traffic is reportedly large\*.
- The newly extended public art gallery in Auckland (Figure 3-30) conveys the following attributes:
  - It is strongly engaging with the city centre (A);
  - It is making an iconic statement through its architecture (in this instance though the use of sustainable Kauri) (B); and
  - It relates visually and physically to the adjacent Albert Park (C).
- An investigation in Dunedin reveals that the public Art Gallery located in The Octagon is surrounded by a large number of arts-related activities, including small art galleries, design stores (fashion, jewellery, photography), art studios, museums, theatres and antique shops. The gallery generates spin-off for these activities.
- In 2010, a green wall installation named 'Vertical Meadow' was constructed at Canterbury Museum by Pocock Design:Environment. Camera footage showed that over a three week period, 180,000 people stopped and engaged the installation. It was extrapolated that 10% of viewers would also visit the museum. This would have increased the museums visitor numbers by 18,000 that month.

**FURTHER STUDY REQUIRED**

- A full assessment should be undertaken to decide between a possible extension of the Southland Museum and Art Gallery, and the option to build a new complex in a city centre location, accommodating the Art Gallery, the Museum and Art Gallery, or only the Museum.



ABOVE FIG. 3-30: The recently extended public art gallery in Auckland

- A full assessment and feasibility study for a new art centre in the city centre should be undertaken. This should also consider using an existing building for this purpose.
- As part of considering the merits of the identification of business precincts, the formation of an arts precinct should be further investigated.

\* Based on an interview with the museum director broadcast by: Radio New Zealand National, Sounds Historical, edition 13 November 2011.

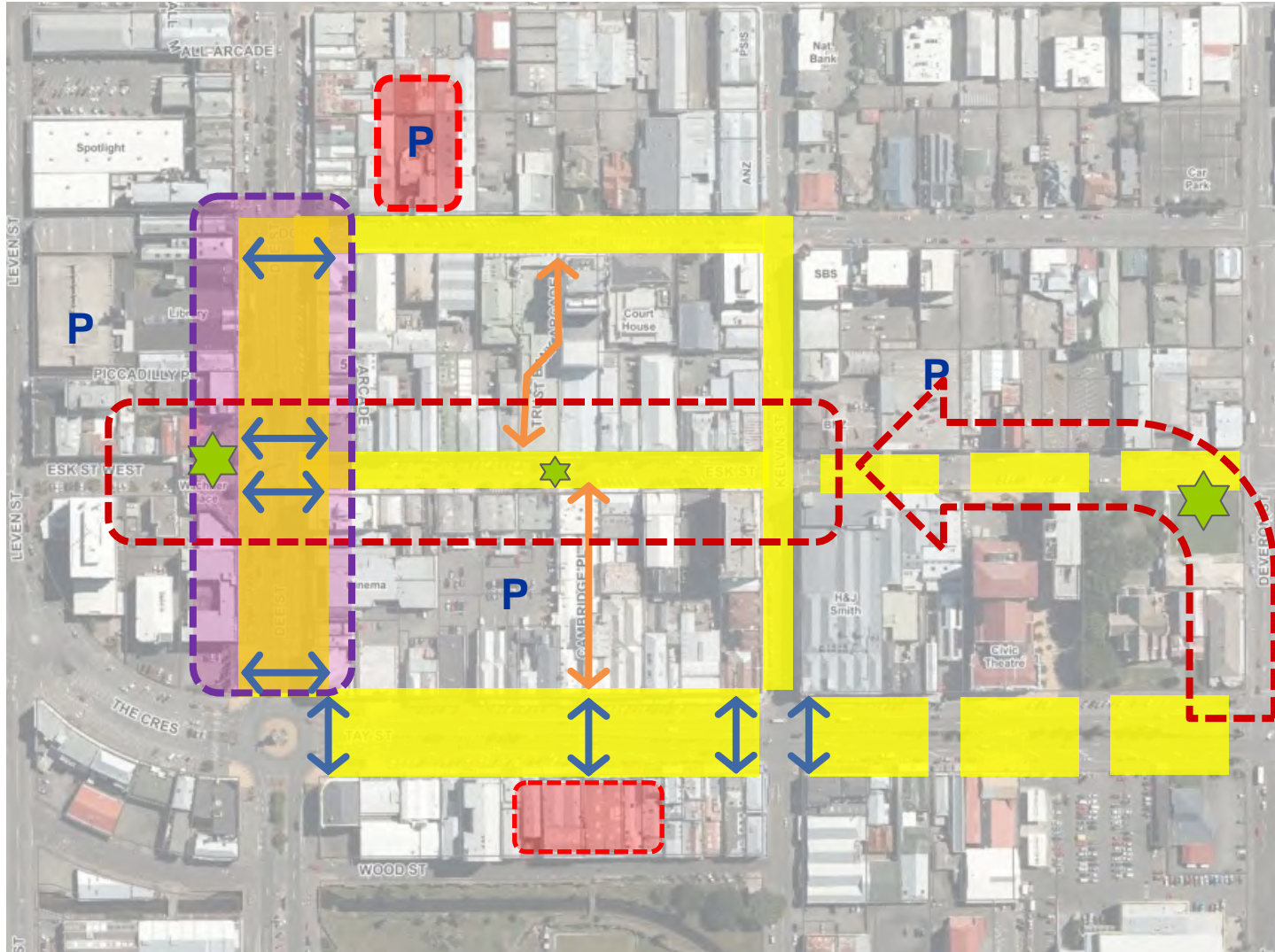
ROLES DURING IMPLEMENTATION	
Agency/ party	Role
Invercargill City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Work with local artists to integrate artworks in public space upgrades</li> <li>→ Undertake an assessment and feasibility study for the development of an art centre in the city centre</li> <li>→ Consider signage and promotion in the city centre for arts related activities taking place in Queens Park</li> <li>→ Encourage building owners to accommodate SIT students with studio and practice space</li> <li>→ Encourage owners of vacant shops to accommodate local artists</li> </ul>
Vibrant Invercargill	Function as intermediary between ICC and local arts groups
Southern Institute of Technology	Facilitate students using city centre spaces for practicing, performing, and exhibiting art
Arts and Culture groups	Consultation partner via proposed Regional Arts Organisation
Proposed Regional Arts Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Promotion of the arts</li> <li>→ Provide linkage between artists and art administrators</li> </ul>
City centre building owners	Liaise with artists and SIT about temporary use of vacant and underutilised spaces
Venture Southland	Establish the regional arts organisation proposed in the Project Art Southland report
Southland Museum and Art Gallery Trust	Decide between a possible extension of the Southland Museum and Art Gallery, and a new build in a city centre location



**SECTION 4****the composite plan**

*This section contains a graphic representation of the plan combining all recommended actions under the eight priorities*

### The Outline Action Plan at a glance



**LEGEND**

- Strengthening the heart of the city centre
- Strengthened pedestrian connection
- Area of streetscape strengthening
- Strengthening as informal nightlife cluster
- Public space upgrade
- Overcoming State Highway severance
- Public off-street car parking opportunity
- Development opportunity
- Existing arcade

ABOVE FIG. 4-1: Outline Action Plan at a glance

# appendices



## Appendix 1. Sketches produced during the working sessions

### ESK STREET

#### Option 1.

- Retention of existing landscape.
  - Addition of street furniture, mainly on the north facing southern side.
  - Footpath build-outs on both sides of the street narrowing the carriageway near the exits of the two arcades.
  - No gain or loss in car parks.
- This option was discarded as the additional public spaces gained are dissected by the carriageway, resulting in a less substantive gain than the preferred option, which has one larger space on one side.

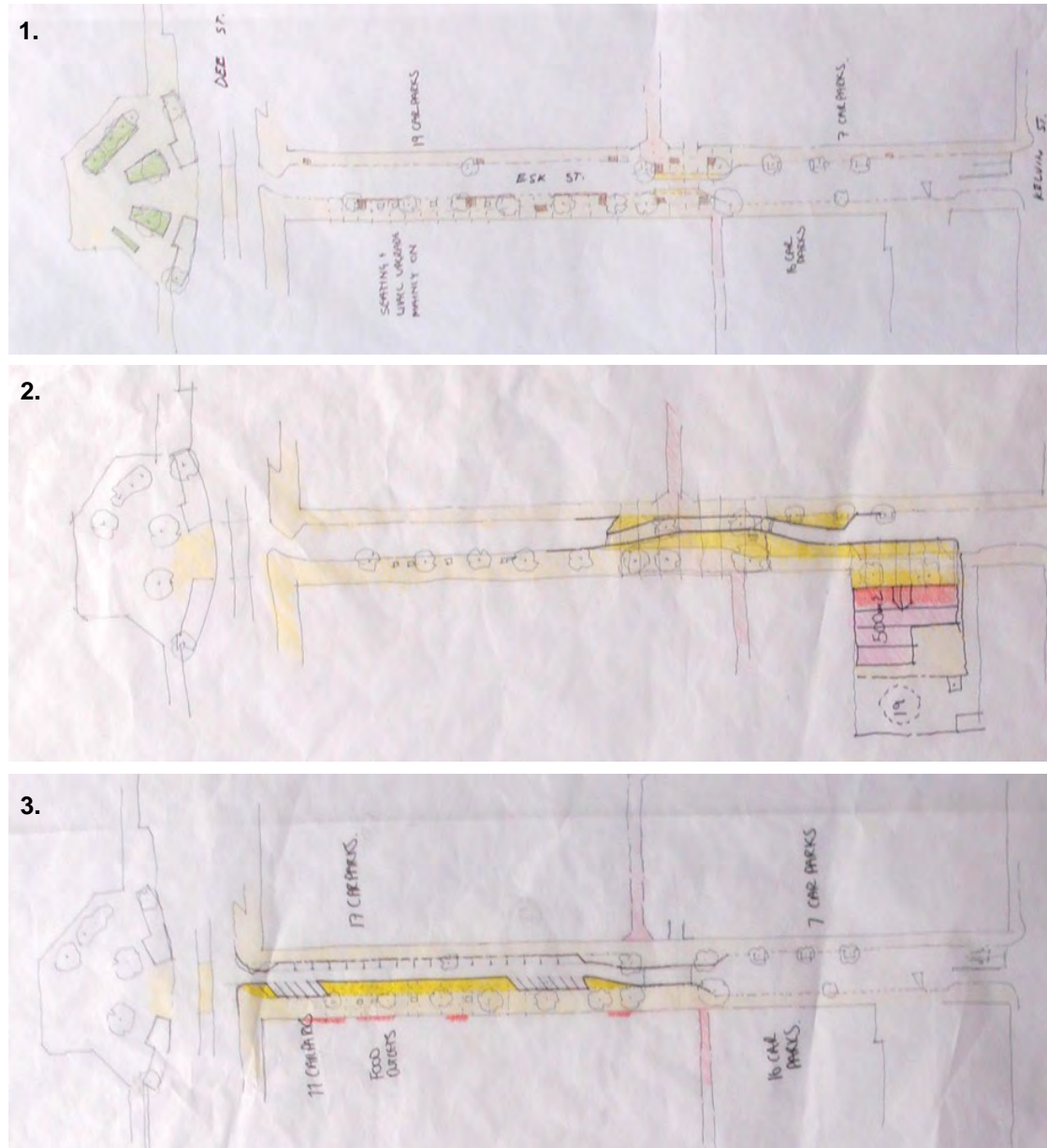
#### Option 2.

- Footpath build-out on the southern side of the street narrowing the carriageway near the exits of the two arcades.
  - Sheltered and sunny site
  - Southland Times building redeveloped and set back for additional public space.
  - Loss of 15 on-street car parks.
- This option was discarded for its loss of on-street car parks and weaker creation of a 'place' than the preferred option.

#### Option 3.

- Expansion of the pedestrian area on the south side of Esk street.
  - Gain of public seating areas in the café area.
  - Retention of existing streetscape, with exception of the bollards which would be removed.
  - Additional angle car parking could be gained.
  - Gain of 9 car parks.
- This option was discarded for its lack of creation of a place and possible direct conflict between café seating and public seating.

### Open space options tested for Esk Street



## WACHNER PLACE REDESIGN

### Wachner Place Option 1.

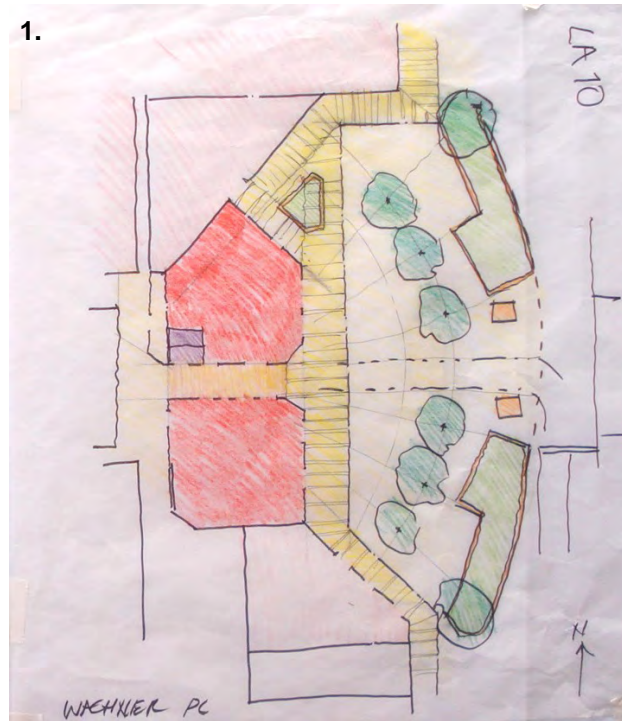
- This option reduces the connection to Esk Street West to an arcade possibly closed at night. The gains made from the land sale for development could be invested in this or another public space in the city centre.
- The walkway through to Esk Street West is short and has reasonable visibility from Dee Street.
- The open space is reduced with a building to give a lively and activated frontage to the space.
- Much of the existing landscape planters and trees are retained.
- The clock tower is retained and incorporated in the new building.
- A possible vehicle thoroughfare can easily be retrofitted.

This option is discarded for at least the following reasons:

1. It blocks off Esk Street West too much, possibly further reducing the viability of business in that area.
2. A reliance on development of buildings in order to revitalise the space could be seen as a risk to its feasibility.
3. The significant reduction of public space may be too much.

### Wachner Place Option 2.

- Significant narrowing of the connection through to Esk Street West by a new building on the northern half of Wachner Place with a significant new façade onto Dee Street.
- The public open space function is concentrated in the north facing more sheltered southern half of Wachner Place.
- Much of the existing landscape planters and trees are retained.
- The clock tower is retained and incorporated in the new building.
- One large planter added in the southern half of Wachner Place.



### Redesign options for Wachner Place

- Similar to the existing situation, the pedestrian connection with Esk Street West is through public open space.
- A possible vehicle thoroughfare can easily be retrofitted.
- The two westernmost columns possibly have to be removed in order to give the new building exposure and gain some free public space.

This option is discarded for at least the following reasons:

1. It blocks off Esk Street West too much, possibly further reducing the viability of business in that area.

2. A reliance on development of buildings in order to revitalise the space could be seen as a risk to its feasibility.
3. The significant reduction of public space may be too much.

## Appendix 2. Relevant background material

The following reports and publications have served as background material for this Outline Action Plan:

- CDA New Zealand. (2010). *Identifying Invercargill's Point of Difference*. Blumsky, M & Kirton, E.
- Cockroft, M. (2011). *Redefining the Square: The Case of Invercargill*. Invercargill North.
- De Beer Marketing & Communications. (2003). *Invercargill CBD Experience Audit*.
- Gabites Porter Consultants. (1995). *Parking Survey - Invercargill Central Business District*.
- Hesselin, A. (2011). *Report on Maintenance Performed on This Building Over the Last 15 Years (Wea Building, Now Southland Education)*. Invercargill.
- Invercargill City Council. (2011). *Revitalisation of Invercargill's City Centre - Public Feedback and Suggestions*. Taylor, N.
- Invercargill City Council. (2011). *Invercargill: The Big Picture - Non-Statutory Spatial Plan (Draft), Invercargill City District June 2011*.
- Invercargill City Council. (2005). *City Centre Parking Guide - Your Guide to the Location and Details of Carparks in the City Centre*. Invercargill.
- John Gray, Registered and Heritage Architect, *Invercargill City Centre Design Guidelines*, August 1998.
- Opus International Consultants. (2011). *Central Business District Invercargill City Parking Study*. Invercargill: Venkataraman, S.
- *South Art Inc. Business Plan 2011/14*.
- Traffic Design Group. (2005). *Invercargill Central Business District Parking Study*. Christchurch.
- Venture Southland. *Economic Profile, Southland, New Zealand*.
- Vibrant Invercargill. (2007). *Invercargill Inner City Business Benchmark Survey*.
- Vibrant Invercargill. (2007). *In Touch: Inner City Developments, Events & Happenings*.