

TO: COUNCIL
FROM: CITY CENTRE CO-ORDINATOR
MEETING DATE: TUESDAY 13 MARCH 2018

REPORT FROM CITY CENTRE CO-ORDINATOR

Report Prepared by: Kari Graber - City Centre Co-ordinator

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with an overview of projects and activities relevant to or taking place in the City Centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Report be received.

IMPLICATIONS

1.	<i>Has this been provided for in the Long Term Plan/Annual Plan?</i> N/A
2.	<i>Is a budget amendment required?</i> N/A
3.	<i>Is this matter significant in terms of Council's Policy on Significance?</i> No.
4.	<i>Implications in terms of other Council Strategic Documents or Council Policy?</i> None.
5.	<i>Have the views of affected or interested persons been obtained and is any further public consultation required?</i> N/A
6.	<i>Has the Child, Youth and Family Friendly Policy been considered?</i> Yes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

CITY CENTRE CO-ORDINATOR INITIATIVES

Rev Up

At the end of January in anticipation of the Burt Munro Challenge the City Centre Co-ordinator, with the help of Deputy Mayor Rebecca Amundsen, organised a major city centre clean up.

Thanks to the Burt Munro Challenge, Invercargill is the recipient of thousands of return guests each year. This year we wanted to show people that we have started to change and that Invercargill is a vibrant city and a place where they want to be. The messaging around our city needed to change and that has started to happen since the launch of our new brand. Invercargill, as a city and a community, must work to sell itself as a place to visit and live, making people think of the city as a fantastic place for both hospitality and vibrancy.

The Rev Up event was a catalyst for moving forward on what we can't change right now and fixing the things we can to make our city more dynamic and vibrant and less dirty and tired. Apart from the upgrade on Esk Street, there has largely been a lack of attention paid to the overall look of our buildings and public spaces in city centre. Rev Up was a chance to change that. People have been complaining about the look of our city centre and have requested more art in the city, as well as features that make the city look vibrant. Rev Up provided the community with an opportunity to show a renewed pride for our city. Residents and businesses who felt a vested interest in the look and condition of their city centre were able to work together to bring a positive change in look and attitude.

The Rev Up event ran over two days and saw a total of 142 participants with a number of Council staff and seven Councillors, including the Mayor, volunteering their time. During the clean-up volunteers picked up over 2,000 cigarette butts, they pulled hundreds of weeds, cleaned out alleyways that retail staff were previously afraid to use and they removed hundreds old posters that were layered over the years. They washed frontages, touched up paint on pillars, planted the flower box in front of the Bank Building, built and hung up over 40 hanging basket planters, removed cobwebs from verandas, touched up and repainted a number of building frontages and washed all the windows in a three block radius. The ILT also contributed by painting the frontage of their buildings on Dee Street next to Bar Luca and also provided walls for artists to paint murals.

A lot of effort went into gathering support for the clean-up with sponsorship coming from a number of businesses including: E Hayes and Sons, Resene Paint, Dadz Windowcleaning Ltd, Creativity Plus, Diacks Nurseries, Fat Bastard Pies and Whitcoulls. Contributions ranged from cleaning products to flowers, soil, paint, lunch for volunteers and more.

Creativity Plus on Tay Street really embraced the clean-up and painted the frontage of their shop with a mural that tells the story of the building's life and its previous businesses, including a book shop and a seamstress. The mural took weeks to complete and was done by members of the Artists' Collective who sell their work from the shop. Feedback has been positive and it has helped create interest in the shop.

A number of SIT graduate art students provided the city with some beautiful public art, including a Buddha on Million Coin Asian Grocery on Tay Street, a praying mantis in on the corner of Dee and Don Streets, and a mural currently being painted on Dee Street in the alleyway of Louie's Tapas Bar. A number of rubbish bins have been painted in different themes including, a fish tank, native birds and poppies. Funding has been secured for two further murals and will be going up later in the year.

Since the Rev Up, the City Centre Co-ordinator has been contacted by two groups that would like to volunteer their time and resources to help with some major projects for the inner city. This is the best possible outcome showing how important the inner city is to the community and they want it to thrive as well.

Moving forward there are plans to do another Rev Up and the date has yet to be decided. The Fire Service was unable to help in the initial Rev Up, due to water restrictions and we will be tackling some of the bigger projects next time with their help. This clean up really showed that CBD is important to the community and they want this part of their city to thrive as much as any other area.

Invercargill Brand

Since the initial launch of our Invercargill brand we have been able to keep the branding current and helped it continue to gain momentum. This has been achieved through our merchandise sales, appearances in various publications, and a willingness to help support its use by various organisations.

Council staff recently worked with the Southern Steel Netball to have the brand appear on-court during the home games of the ANZ Premiership Competition. This will allow for brand recognition by over a 100,000 viewers nationally. The players will also be provided with custom Invercargill shirts in their team colours that they can wear during down time, or while traveling. The athletes will be excellent ambassadors for our brand, our story and our city.

Since we gave the Key to the City to media personality Mark Richardson in September of last year, Invercargill has received a great deal of positive media brand exposure. Mr Richardson has been spotted twice on national television wearing his Invercargill shirt on both the Cricket Show airing on 23 February and 3 March. The exposure and positive commentary about Invercargill has been valuable to the city. It's helping to change the rest of New Zealand's attitude towards us as to a great place to visit or work.

Merchandise sales are staying steady on the Invercargillnz.com site as well as through the retail outlets in the city. We recently started stocking Windsor Stationery and are now selling Invercargill branded merchandise at five retail outlets. We are still receiving requests from businesses and organisations to use the branding in their materials. Since January the brand is now featured on the wall of Pita Pit on Tay Street, we are also working with Starbucks to provide them with branded mugs for the southern-most Starbucks at the Esk Street store. The brand also featured in the Channel 39 Burt Munro special, and the Southland Museum and Art Gallery used the branding on a major wall for the Burt Munro display.

We have recently received requests for the use of the branding from some local organisations. The Iris Society of New Zealand will be using it for the Invercargill section of the catalogue and promotional material. Badminton Southland has also approached us and requested to use it on tee-shirts for the Australasian Under 17 Badminton Championships to be hosted here in April.

This positive embracing of the branding is a tribute to the timelessness and adaptability the brand provides. Staff will continue to support the brand so that it does not suffer from lack of nurturing or become stagnant. The next step for brand implementation will be working on what the Invercargill brand tells in terms of a story: that here in Invercargill you can 'dream big'. There are opportunities for everyone. Success, work and family are all achievable here in Invercargill.

Marketview Data

The Marketview data we are receiving has been very useful in assessing changes and trends in spending over the past five years. We now know that spending on fashion, discretionary items and food and liquor increased by 2.1% from December 2016 to December 2017. This is an encouraging figure that validates the resourcing and promotion of inner city events and activities to help drive economic spend in the city centre during the holiday period.

The Christmas Festival and other city centre events like the Gingerbread House Competition and our Shop Local campaign are doing what they were designed to do. This is a great start but more needs to be done to make the city centre a destination at Christmas, where people feel like they want to come spend their time and money.

During the same period in December when we saw the increase in local spending, there was also an increase of 24% in online shopping last year. This far exceeded the bricks and mortar establishments and still gives cause for concern moving forward. Businesses must work harder than ever to compete to be sustainable against online competition.

These figures are valuable for planning purposes and offer the ability to get a true understanding of what the future might look like and where we need to be resilient. It shows a need for improvement in marketing and establishing loyalty and relationships with customers. The online Storie site Invercargillnz.com is a tool that Council implemented last year to help smaller businesses, as well as larger retailers, to promote themselves with an online presence. The site is just now starting to gain some traction and will serve as a valuable tool once it is fully supported by staff and businesses. The online shopping side of the site will be fully functioning by April and will help drive consumers shopping online to do it locally.

Other interesting numbers that have come out of the spending data from Marketview include an overall increase in spending in the CBD each month of December since 2015, totalling \$541,216 over the three year period.

Pure spend for Invercargill CBD in December Months:

December 2015	December 2016	December 2017
		32,260,715
	31,997,779	
31,719,449		

This means that we are doing somethings right in terms of attracting more spending in our local economy but we still have a way to go to ensure economic sustainability for our city centre. The more reasons we can provide for people to visit and enjoy and spend time within the city centre the more vibrant and sustainable the businesses become.

Staff will continue to gather data to help with the delivery and promotion of new industries for our city centre. The data is a very useful tool to help show where we are experiencing spending attrition and where we are meeting the mark. It is worth noting the tourist spend numbers have been up by 10% from previous years and this may need to be an area of focus moving forward.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE CBD ABOUT ROADWORKS

This year has started with a lot of work being done on the infrastructure of the CBD. This includes upgrading street lights, the installation of new traffic lights and upgrading the drainage services and renewal of the existing stormwater and foul sewer mains within Tay Street between the Nith/Kelvin Street intersection and Queens Drive.

This work involves replacing the existing brick barrel stormwater main on both sides of Tay Street that was originally installed in 1877. It has to be done because if there was a failure in the system the consequences would be dire for the CBD.

Unfortunately this has also meant disruption for all the businesses in the area of Tay and Kelvin Streets. The Engineering Department has been working hard to keep businesses informed but it is not an easy process for anyone. The City Centre Co-ordinator has been trying to support the businesses but it is not always possible to have the most up-to-date information and one person cannot be everywhere.

An alternative communication solution has been developed by the Council's Communications Team in cooperation with the Engineering Services Group. The new Facebook page called *Invercargill Word on the Street* will be a tool for the members of the public and businesses to use to understand what is happening to the roads in the city and how to best plan for changes.

Since its release last week we have shared it with local businesses and the response has been very positive. Many of them are thankful to have a point of call to understand issues that may affect their traffic flows.

With the latest work not expected to be completed until October 2018 it gives the Council a flexible way to communicate and businesses the opportunity to modify or brace for future changes.

UPCOMING EVENTS

St Patrick's Day Celtic Family Gala

This alcohol-free and no-charge, family event will be taking place on Saturday 17 March at the Scottish Hall. The City Centre Co-ordinator has been working with Leon Hartnett, who approached her in late January to inquire about the possibility of holding a family friendly St Patrick's Day celebration in the city centre.

Mr Hartnett has done a fantastic job of garnering community support with a number of musicians, clubs and individuals coming to share their talent and abilities to celebrate all things Irish and Celtic. This is a shining example of what we would like to see more of in the city centre - individuals who see the opportunity for community events where we can help connect, facilitate and support them so that their initiatives can become a reality.

Good Friday Criterium in the City Centre

This is another event for which the City Centre Co-ordinator was contacted by an individual who wanted to hold an event in the CBD. Allan Dunn, who coordinates the Vital Signs Tour de Lakes, wanted to change the start of this race to Invercargill. He asked for help in organising a Criterium that starts in Invercargill on 30 March at 2.30 pm from Pak N Save car park. This will be followed by three more days of racing around the roads of Southland.

With support from multiple members of Council staff, Mr Dunn has been able to organise and advertise the event which will hopefully bring families down to enjoy some exciting racing around the streets of Invercargill. The event is likely to be small this first year but if well supported by spectators it is likely that this event could grow. The organisers are keen to add a kids' race, and a celebrity race to the event, as well as music and food trucks to emulate some of the great races that take place in many cities in other countries around the world.

Matariki

Planning is already underway for the next Matariki Festival. The festival will take place on Saturday 7 July. This year we are very lucky to have been approached by Raniera Dallas who works for the Nga Kete Matauranga Pounamu Charitable Trust, who has offered to volunteer his time to help grow and support the event. Raniera comes with a plethora of ideas and support channels to help connect Council staff with some key groups and bring more context to this special celebration.

Halloween Trick or Treating

Again the Council will be sponsoring Trick or Treating in the city centre. This will be taking place on Saturday 27 October. Last year's event was even more successful than the first. Despite tripling the lollies given out and having candy alternatives provided by Public Health South, Splash Palace and the Library, some businesses still ran out before the end of the event.

This year we will look to change the format and children will have to accomplish a number of activities to be given their trick or treat hit list. This will ensure fairness and an ability to control the crowds better.

Last year we had number of SIT students helping and we hope to have them again this year. The students were extremely helpful to the businesses and the community feedback was very positive about them. Participation numbers were estimated at around 2,000 people in 2017. This year we expect even more families to take part but will be working to make it an activity-filled time as well.

CONCLUSION

The City Centre Co-ordinator has achieved a majority of the actions identified in the Invercargill Retail Strategy, with a host of positive outcomes. It may be a good time to review the objectives in our strategy and identify areas where we need to continue to improve, or potentially may have been missed because they did not exist in the past, or were not relevant at the time. Now that plans have been announced for the major projects under way from HWCP Management Limited it will be imperative to continue to build and maintain ongoing loyalty and support for our local businesses.

It important that the seeds planted over the last couple of years be embraced and we continue to grow opportunity for vibrancy and success in the city including, events, branding, access to statistical data, good communication and support to the retailers and community. The city is experiencing the biggest changes it has faced in over 30 years and its imperative the key stakeholders and the community are taken on the journey together for a city that is truly vibrant and thriving.
